A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey

Irene de Jong
A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey

Whereas traditional commentaries tend to be comprehensive and micro-textual, this narratological commentary focuses on one aspect of the Odyssey, its narrativity, and pays lavish attention to the meso- and macro-levels. Drawing on the concepts of modern narratology as well as the insights of Homeric scholarship, it discusses the role of narrator and narratees, methods of characterization and description, plot-development, focalization, and the narrative exploitation of type-scenes. Full attention is also given to the structure, characterizing function, and relation to the narrative context of the abundantly present speeches. Finally, the numerous themes and motifs, which so subtly contribute to the unity of this long text, are traced and evaluated. Although Homer’s brilliant narrative art has always been admired, this commentary aims to lay bare the techniques responsible for this brilliance. All Greek is translated and all technical terms explained in a glossary.

Irene de Jong is Professor of Ancient Greek Literature at the Universiteit van Amsterdam. Her publications include Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad (1987) and Narrative in Drama: The Art of the Euripidean Messenger-Speech (1991).
A Narratological Commentary on the

ODYSSEY

IRENE J. F. DE JONG

Universiteit van Amsterdam
# CONTENTS

**Preface**  
*page vii*

**Glossary**  
*xi*

## Commentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book One</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Two</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Three</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Four</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Five</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Six</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Seven</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Eight</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Nine</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Ten</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Eleven</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Twelve</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Thirteen</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Fourteen</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Fifteen</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Sixteen</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Seventeen</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Eighteen</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Nineteen</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Twenty</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Twenty-one</td>
<td>504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Twenty-two</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# CONTENTS

Book Twenty-three 545  
Book Twenty-four 565  
Appendix A 587  
Appendix B 589  
Appendix C 591  
Appendix D 594  
Appendix E 596  
Appendix F 598  

*Bibliography* 599  
*Index of Greek words* 619  
*Index of subjects* 621
This commentary differs in a number of respects from traditional commentaries. The latter may be broadly defined as heterogeneous, problem-oriented, and micro-textual: they consist of philological, linguistic, literary, or historical notes on mostly small parts of the text which had been deemed difficult by previous commentators—a format which goes back to the historical forerunners of our commentaries, the lemmatic scholia. This narratological commentary covers the whole text, not only the problematic parts, deals exclusively with its narrative aspects, and includes a discussion of the macro-textual and meso-textual levels.

I use the term ‘narratological’ here in a broad sense. The word ‘narratology’ was coined in 1969 by Todorov, but the theoretical interest in narrative actually started much earlier, when novelists like Gustave Flaubert and Henry James set out to ‘defend’ their art by means of technical discussions. Next, it was the Russian formalists at the beginning of the twentieth century and the French structuralists of the nineteen-sixties who developed a set of refined tools to analyse narrative texts. When narratology was introduced into classical scholarship, one of the first texts to which it was applied was Homer, and this means that there exists a large body of narratological analysis of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. So much for narratology in the strict sense of the word. When dealing with the Homeric epics, however, there is much more. Through the ages Homeric scholarship has produced a wealth of information on narrative aspects of the poems. We have the exegetical scholia of antiquity, the interpretations by Unitarians, the analyses of type-scenes by oralists, and the close readings by non-oralists. Thus the methodological pillars on which this commentary rests include studies by narratologists like Genette and Bal, oralists like Edwards and Fenik, and non-oralists like Besslich and Lohmann. To some, this may seem like irresponsible eclecticism, but it has always been my firm conviction—one which I have defended at numerous places—that when analysing the storytelling in a text, the genesis of that text, though not irrelevant, is not of prime importance.
A commentary which is interested in the story, is by definition interested in the entire text: it will deal with the narrator and his narratees, the development of the plot, characterization, scenery, and aspects of time. Looked at in this way, passages which have never seemed difficult may require narratological clarification. Speech, which takes up no less than 66 per cent of the Odyssean text, also falls under the scope of this narratological commentary. Not only do the speakers of the *Odyssey* often function as narrators, but the relationship between speech and narrator-text is of prime interest also: how are speeches prepared for by the narrator, and how are the announcements made in speeches fulfilled? Speeches are also one of the prime means by which the Homeric heroes are characterized. Seeing that thus far there has been no study of the speeches of the *Odyssey* along the lines of Lohmann’s book on the Iliadic speeches, I also pay considerable attention to the structure of speeches and sets of speeches. Not included in this commentary are (neo-analytical) discussions of possible relationships between the version of a particular narrative which we find in Homer and older ones. Readers interested in this diachronical aspect of the Odyssean narratives may fruitfully consult the recent study by Danek (1998).

True to its narrative focus, this commentary does not proceed word by word, but unit by unit. Thus, starting with the largest unit, an episode like the *Telemachy*, it gradually zooms in on a scene, a speech, a theme or a motif, even a word. Demarcating these units, in particular those on the meso-textual level, was not an easy task. For – as Mark Edwards warned me long ago – the Homeric text is a continuous stream, which is not easily divided up. Moreover, when one starts doing so, one discovers, first, that there are many ways of dividing the text, and second, that a passage can often be looked at from many different angles. I have therefore decided that, unlike the Homeric narrator, I will not hesitate to retrace my steps and, where necessary, discuss the same lines in different contexts. For my readers this means that when consulting this commentary for a particular passage, they would do well to cast their net wide, either, when hitting on a lemma which deals with a few lines, to read also the lemmata which precede, or, when hitting on a lemma which deals with many lines, to read also the lemmata which follow. For ease of reference I have retained the traditional book-divisions, but the books themselves are not analysed in terms of narrative units.

An obvious question at this point is why I have opted for the format of a commentary at all. Initially, I did toy with the idea of making a Homeric pendant of Heinze’s *Virgils’ epische Technik*, i.e., a paradigmatic discussion of Homer’s narrative techniques. Upon reflection, I decided that it would be more instructive to offer a syntagmatic discussion, showing the workings of those techniques *in situ*, so to speak. This narratological commentary is therefore a meta-commentary, in the
sense that it does not provide assistance in reading the Greek text (though all the Greek is translated), but rather is intended to enrich the reader’s understanding of the text, once he or she has read it.  

A few words about the organization. The Greek text quoted is that of Allen (Oxford Classical Text). I have chosen this text not because it is the best – Von der Muhll and Von Thiel are better – but because it is still the text most commonly used all over the world. Technical terms are explained in a separate glossary, to which the reader is referred by a dagger (†). A bold type-face, e.g., ‘Oresteia’ story, signals a synoptic discussion, i.e., a comprehensive discussion of a certain topic, including a full bibliography. When the same topic recurs at another place, an asterisk alerts readers to the existence of a synoptic discussion, which can be located via the index. For reasons of space, the secondary literature is not discussed, but listed in footnotes. The lemmatic and running commentaries by Ameis-Hentze-Cauer, Eisenberger, Garvie, Heubeck et al., Jones, Rothe, Rutherford, Stanford, and Stürmer, which had a permanent place on my desk, are not referred to explicitly. In order to avoid ending up in a perpetuum mobile, no scholarship later than 1997 has been included. When listing parallel places I have employed the following strategy: wherever there were abundant Odyssean parallels, I have confined myself to those; where the phenomenon under discussion was rare, I have included both Odyssean and Iliadic places.

This commentary started in 1991 as a joint project with Scott Richardson of St John’s College, Minnesota. At an early stage, considerations of time compelled him to withdraw, but I look back on our one year of collaboration with great pleasure and warmth. During the years I worked on the first version of the text I benefited enormously from the comments of Mark Edwards and Bas van der Mijë; the latter supplemented his written comments with long talks on the structure and organization of the commentary. The second version was read through in part by Tijn Cuijpers and Douglas Olson, in its entirety by René Nünlist; I am particularly grateful to the latter, who at a late stage offered many apt corrections and improvements. I thank Roos Meijering for her supplements to my glossary. Kees Ruijgh helped me in many places by clarifying the basis of everything, the Greek. The cross-references and text-references were checked with great akribeia by Heleen Keizer. Barbara Fasting corrected my English with her usual accuracy and feeling. Of course, all remaining errors and idiosyncracies are mine. I thank the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences for the senior fellowship (1988–92), during which I

---

was able to initiate this project, Jan Maarten Bremer as the curator of the Van der Valk-Fund for the subvention which enabled Heleen to do her work, and the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research for the grant which made possible the correction of my English. Working with the Cambridge University Press, in the persons of Pauline Hire, Michael Sharp, and Linda Woodward, has been a great pleasure.

I dedicate this book to my parents: ὠς οὐδὲν γλύκιον . . . τοκήων γίνεται . . .
The aim of this glossary is twofold. In the first place, it explains the narratological and literary terms which are regularly used in the commentary. Whenever possible I have included the ancient equivalents of these terms, as found in the scholia. In the second place, it summarizes the most important narrative devices employed in the *Odyssey*. Readers of the commentary are referred to the glossary by a †.

**actorial motivation** (‘psychologische Begründung’): the analysis of the ‘why’ of the story in terms of the aims and intentions of a character. An actorial motivation is usually explicit. Compare **narratorial motivation**. ¹

**ambiguity**: a character intentionally speaks words which for himself—and the narrates—have a different significance than for his addressee(s). Compare **dramatic irony** and **irony**.

**analepsis** (flashback, ‘Rückwendung’): the narration of an event which took place before the point in the story where we find ourselves.² A distinction can be made between internal analepses (which recount events falling within the time limits of the main story) and external analepses (which recount events falling outside those time limits); between repeating analepses (narrating events also narrated elsewhere, producing a **mirror-story**) and completing analepses (narrating events which are not narrated elsewhere); and between narratorial analepses (by the narrator) and actorial analepses (by characters). Compare **prolepsis**.

**anticipatory doublet**: the foreshadowing of a coming event, theme, or scene by a minor replica of itself. The later instance is usually more fully developed, emotionally intense, and significant.³

¹ Stürmer (1921: 580).
appositive summary: a summary of the type ὅς οἷ μέν + imperfect, ‘thus they were . . . ’; i.e., which both recapitulates the action of the preceding scene and, because of the imperfect, suggests that the action is continuing. It usually occurs at a change of scene.4

‘argument’ function: the function or significance which an embedded story told by a character has for the characters.5 One of the most common argument functions is that of the hortatory, dissuading, or apologetic paradigm. Compare ‘key’ function.

‘catch-word’ technique: when a character echoes, often at the beginning of his speech, a word or expression from his interlocutor’s speech, often with a different tone or meaning.6

change of scene: changes of scene in Homer can be brought about (i) by following a character who moves from place A to place B; (ii) by following a line of perception, when an event at place A is heard/seen by a character at place B; (iii) through a correspondence of action, when characters at place B are doing the same thing as those at place A; (iv) discontinuously, i.e., without any intermediary, perception, or correspondence, but at least by being prepared for by an appositive summary; and (v) abruptly, without preparation.7

character doublet: two characters who are similar in personality and actions.8

characterization: the presentation of a character, which includes his physical appearance, biography, and personality traits. Characterization may be explicit (a chunk of information is given – not necessarily at the first mention of a character – which is tailored to the direct context), or implicit (information, often pertaining to personality traits, is left to be inferred and assembled into a whole by the narratees). In the case of explicit characterization, we may further distinguish between narratorial characterization (given by the narrator) or actorial characterization (given by characters).9

character-language: words which are typically used by characters, i.e., which occur mainly or exclusively in speeches and embedded focalization.10 The figures given in the commentary are based on both the Iliad and the Odyssey.

‘continuity of time’ principle (‘loi de la succession’): the narrator never retraces his steps, i.e., when he turns from storyline A to storyline B and back to A’ again, time ticks on and B takes over where A stopped, A’ where B stopped, etc. When

---

5 Willcock (1964), Austin (1966), and Andersen (1987a).
storyline B fills the foreground, storyline A usually remains ‘stationary’, i.e., nothing worth recounting is taking place (‘temps mort’).  

**description**: a passage in which features are ascribed to characters, objects, or locations. In Homer descriptions rarely interrupt the story and thereby create a pause (see **rhythm**): explicit narratorial **characterization**, a static description of an object or **scenery** focalized by the narrator. As a rule, the description is integrated into the story: explicit actorial **characterization** (in a speech), dynamic description of objects (either in the form of an external **analepsis**, which recounts the history of the object, or of a **scene**, which shows its assembly or fabrication), or **scenery** focalized by characters.

‘**domino**’ form: a new topic is introduced at the end of a speech, which is then picked up at the beginning of the next speech (A–B–C–C’–D–E–E’–F–G).

**double motivation**: when an action, thought, or quality is ascribed to both a god and a human being.

**doublet**: a scene which in its structure repeats another scene. Compare **anticipatory doublet**.

**dramatic irony**: a situation, action, or words have an additional significance for the **narratees**, one of which the characters are unaware. Compare **ambiguity** and **irony**.

**ellipsis** (**κατά τὸ σιωπώμενον**, gap, ‘Leerstelle’): information (concerning an event, action, motive, causal link, or personality trait) is left out and has to be filled in by the **narratees** themselves. Compare **rhythm**.

**embedded focalization**: the representation by the **narrator** in the **narrator-text** of a character’s focalization, i.e., perceptions, thoughts, emotions, or words (indirect speech). Embedded focalization can be **explicit** (when there is a shifter in the form of a verb of seeing or thinking, or a subordinator followed by subjunctive or optative, etc.) or **implicit** (when such a shifter is lacking).

**embedded story**: a story which is embedded in the **main story**. It is told either by the narrator or by one of the characters, who thereby functions as secondary narrator-focalizer. Embedded stories can also take the form of **embedded focalization**. They are external or internal **analepses** or – less often – **prolepses**. They may have an **argument** and/or **key function**. They are usually narrated in an

---

16 Scholia, e.g., *ad Il. 8.221* (‘it has been passed over in silence that Agamemnon has taken his mantle’), Meinel (1915), Genette (1980: 51–2), Iser (1984: 284–315), and Richardson (1990: 99–100).
allusive, elliptical style, the speaker concentrating on those aspects which are relevant to the message he wants to convey.

**epic regression** (ἐξ ἀναστροφῆς): a speaker mentions an event, person, or object, then moves back in time—typically with the particle γὰρ or a relative pronoun—until a certain point, from which he again moves forward in time again until the point of departure is reached (C→B→A→B′→C′). The second time (B′→C′) the events are usually told in more detail. Epic regression is a form of multiple ring-composition.

**fabula**: all the events which are recounted in the story, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order. For the fabula of the Odyssey, see Appendix A.

**‘fill-in’ technique** (τὸ διάκενον ἀναπληρώσας, ‘Deckszenen’): the time required for one action (A) to be completed is filled with another action (B). While in the Iliad A and B are usually not relevant to each other, in the Odyssey they are.

**focalizer** (Λύσις ἐκ τοῦ προσώπου): the person (the narrator or a character) through whose eyes the events and persons of a narrative are ‘seen’.

**‘free string’ form**: a structuring principle of speeches and sets of speeches, whereby speakers simply add one element after another (A→B→C→D→E). It is often found in emotional contexts.

**‘if not’-situation**: ‘there X would have happened, if Y had not intervened’. Often a pathetic or tension-raising device.

**indirect dialogue** (Übereckgespräch): A talks to B about character C or about things which concern C (and which he intends C to hear) without addressing C.

**‘interlace’ technique**: the technique of interweaving different storylines or scenes through regular switches between them. Cf. Appendix B.

---

18 Scholia, e.g., ad II. 11.671–761 (‘the story is told in reverse order. For in the case of longer stories to narrate from the beginning makes the hearing duller, but to begin at the main point is agreeable’), Schadewaldt (1938: 84), Krischer (1971: 136–40), and Slater (1983).


20 Scholia, e.g., ad II. 6.237 (‘having filled the empty space of Hector’s journey with the scene between Glaucus and Diomedes’), Stürmer (1921: 600–1), Schadewaldt (1938: 77–9), and Bassett (1938: 39–40).


‘interruption’ technique: an action or idea is introduced, suspended for a while, and then resumed and completed.26

Irony (ἔρωτεο): a character speaks words which he intends his addressee(s) to understand as having a different significance.27 Compare ambiguity and dramatic irony.

Jörgensen’s law: characters, lacking the omniscience of the narrator, often ascribe divine interventions to Ζεύς (in general), to an unspecified god (διόμων, θεός, θεόι), or to the wrong god.28

Juxtaposition: the positioning of two similar actions, scenes, or stories next to each other, whereby the narratees are invited to note and appreciate the differences.29

‘key’ function: the function or significance which an embedded story told by a character has for the narratees. Compare ‘argument’ function.30

Main story: the events which are told by the narrator (minus external analepses and prolepses). The main story of the Odyssey comprises forty-one days (cf. Appendix A). Compare embedded story.

Mirror-story: an embedded story which in its entirety reflects the main story (if an embedded story only reflects aspects of the main story, it is better to analyse these correspondences in terms of its ‘key’ function) or another embedded story. A mirror-story can take the form of a repeating analepsis (ἀνακεφαλαίωσις).31

Misdirection: the narratees are emphatically prepared for an event, which in the end does not occur, or takes place later (retardation) or differently.32

Motif: a minimal recurrent narrative unit (e.g., ‘watchdog’ motif).

Narratees: the representatives of the hearers/readers in the text. They are the addressees of the narrator (in full: the primary narratees-focalizees).33

Narrator: the representative of the author in the text (in full: the primary narrator-focalizer).34

Narrator-text: those parts of the text which are presented by the narrator, i.e., the parts between the speeches. We may further distinguish between simple narrator-text (when the narrator presents his own focalization) and embedded focalization (when the narrator presents the focalization of a character).

27 Scholia, e.g., ad II. 1.410.
28 Jörgensen (1904).
30 Andersen (1987a).
narratorial motivation (‘ökonomische Begründung’): the analysis of the ‘why’ of the story in terms of the aims and intentions of the narrator. In Homer the narratorial motivation always remains implicit. Compare actorial motivation.35

paralepsis: a speaker provides more information than he should, when the narrator intrudes with his superior knowledge into the embedded focalization of a character, or could, when a speaking character has more knowledge than is possible (transference).36 Compare paralipsis.

paralipsis (παράλεψις): a speaker provides less information than he actually has; details or events are left out, to be told at a later, more effective place.37 Special Homeric applications of this principle are the technique of the gradual revelation (‘stückweise Enthüllung’, ‘Ungenauigkeitsprinzip’), when we are only gradually informed about the fulfilment of an announced goal;38 and the technique of the piecemeal presentation, when a story is recounted in two or more tellings, each of which complements the other.39

parallel form: when speeches or sets of speeches are structured according to the A–B–A’–B’ pattern.

periphrastic denomination (ἀντωνομασία): a reference to a character not by proper name but by a form of indirect description (e.g., ‘father’ or ‘master’ instead of ‘Odysseus’).40

prolepsis (πρόληψις, προσαναφώνησις, flashforward, foreshadowing, ‘Vorauswendung’): the narration of an event which will take place later than the point in the story where we find ourselves.41 A distinction can be made between internal prolepses (referring to events which fall within the time limits of the main story) and external prolepses (which refer to events which fall outside those time limits), and between narratorial prolepses (made by the narrator) and actorial prolepses (made by characters). Compare analepsis and seed.

refrain-composition (‘Ritornellkomposition’): the recurrence of the same word or phrase in a continuous series of passages dealing with the same subject (often a catalogue), strengthening the connection between them.42

retardation: either (i) a slowing down of the narrative rhythm, or (ii) the postponement of an announced event through the intervention of other, sometimes even

---

35 Stürmer (1921: 580).
37 Scholia, e.g., ad II. 17.24 (‘It is Homer’s custom to leave out, παραλείπειν, some points and tell them later’), Gefsicken (1927: 1–6), Genette (1980: 51–3), and Richardson (1990: 99–100).
38 Schadewaldt (1938: 110, 112–13, 140) and Heubeck (1954: 18–19).
42 Van Otterlo (1944: 31–3).
downright opposite events (a form of misdirection). It is used to add weight and/or create tension.\textsuperscript{43}

**reverse order** (τὸ δεύτερον πρῶτον, Homeric hysteron proteron, ‘continuity of thought’ principle): when two persons, objects, or ideas have been mentioned, it is the second which is uppermost in the mind and is taken up first (A–B–B′–A'). The principle may determine the structure of speeches, sets of speeches, subsequent scenes (going to bed — rising), or speech and narrative (order — execution).\textsuperscript{44}

**rhythm**: the relation between text-time and fabula-time. An event may be told as a scene (text-time = fabula-time), summary (text-time < fabula-time), retardation (text-time > fabula-time), or ellipsis (no text-time matches fabula-time). Finally, there may be a pause, when the action is suspended to make room for a description (no fabula-time matches text-time).\textsuperscript{45}

**ring-composition**: when the end of a passage repeats its beginning (simple: A–B–A′, or multiple: A–B–C–B′–A′). The device is used mainly to enclose a chunk of explicit characterization, an analepsis, or a description, or as a structuring device in speeches and sets of speeches.\textsuperscript{46} Sometimes the situation has evolved at the moment of resumption (progressive ring-composition).

**scene**: a narrative unit created by a combination of events or actions taking place at the same place and involving the same characters. A scene is usually told more or less mimetically, in that the text-time matches the fabula-time; see rhythm. When the same constellation recurs more than once (but is not as formalized as a type-scene), the scene is labelled, e.g., ‘farewell’ scene.

**scenery**: in Homer scenery is never described systematically or for its own sake; rather, we find descriptions or brief references when the story needs them; they derive almost exclusively from characters, in embedded focalization or a speech. Scenery descriptions either consist of a list of items connected via refrain composition (ἐνθα or ἐν) or have some form of spatial organization, or are a combination of the two.\textsuperscript{47}

**seed** (προοικονομεῖν, hint, advance mention): the insertion of a piece of information, the relevance of which will only later become clear. The later event thus

\textsuperscript{43} Scholia, e.g., \textit{ad Il.} 15.390 (‘when he leads his story to a climax, he often uses changes of subject, so as to increase the tension of his listeners’), Austin (1966), Reichel (1990), and Morrison (1992: 35–49).

\textsuperscript{44} Scholia, e.g., \textit{ad Il.} 2.629 (‘Homer always deals with the later first’) and Bassett (1920, 1938: 119–28).


\textsuperscript{46} Van Otterlo (1944), Lohmann (1970: 12–30), and Stanley (1993: 6–9).

prepared for becomes more natural, logical, or plausible. Seeds are a form of prolepsis.

silent characters (κωφά πρόσωπα): characters who are present but do not speak.
simile: a situation or scene, usually drawn from nature or daily life, which is introduced by way of comparison (X did Y, as when . . ., thus X did Y). The scenes/situations are usually omnitemporal (epic τε, present tense, gnomic aorists) and peopled by anonymous persons. The point of contact (tertium comparationis) between simile and narrative context is usually ‘advertised’ by means of a verbal echo. The tertium points up the primary function of the simile, which is to illustrate a particular detail of the narrative context. Similes often have one or more secondary functions as well: to make clear a contrast, draw thematic lines, foreshadow later events, or engage the narratees by making them share the feelings of one of the characters.

story: the events of the fabula as dispositioned and ordered in the text. The story consists of the main story and embedded stories. In comparison with the fabula, the events in the story may differ in frequency (they may be told more than once, as in the case of repeating analepses and prolepses), rhythm (they may be told at great length or quickly), or order (the chronological order may be changed, see analepsis and prolepsis).

story-pattern: a recurrent sequence of events or scenes, which is less formalized than a type-scene (e.g., the ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern).

summary: the narration of events in a compressed form, rather than scenically.

summary priamel: a priamel the foil of which does not consist of a series of items, but rather one summary term (‘there are many x’s, but X is the biggest’).

text: the verbal presentation of the story (and hence fabula) by a narrator.

theme: a recurrent topic which is essential to the narrative as a whole (e.g., the theme of ‘cunning versus force’).

transference: a character displays knowledge of something which, strictly speaking, he cannot know, but which the narratees do know; the knowledge of the narratees is ‘transferred’ to the character. Transference is a form of para-lepsis.

48 Scholia, e.g., ad Il. 2.272, Genette (1980: 75) and Bal (1985: 65).
49 Scholion ad Il. 1.332 (‘Homer was the first to introduce the tragic device of the silent characters’), Besslich (1966: 94–5), and de Jong (1987c).
50 Bassett (1921), Fränkel (1921), Coffey (1957), Lee (1964), Scott (1974), and Moulton (1977).
52 Lord (1960: 68–98, ‘themes’).
55 Scholion ad Il. 16.844–5 (‘what the poet knows, he has imparted to a heroic character’), Bassett (1938: 130–40), and Kakridis (1982).
triadic structure: a repetition of three similar scenes.56

type-scene: a recurrent block of narrative with an identifiable structure and often in identical language, describing recurrent actions of everyday life (e.g., the ‘sacrifice’ type-scene). Type-scenes can be compressed and expanded, and the order of their elements changed. These manipulations turn them into powerful narrative instruments, e.g., they place accents or create – surprising or dramatic – effects.57

typical number: the Homeric epics, like the Bible and folktales, show a predilection for certain numbers (esp. three and nine), which have a symbolic or general meaning rather than a descriptive one.58

57 Arend (1933), Fenik (1968), and Edwards (1980a, 1992).
58 Blom (1930), Waltz (1933), and Germain (1954).
COMMENTARY
BOOK ONE

At the beginning of the story the narrator announces the subject (Odysseus), the starting point (Odysseus detained by Calypso), and – vaguely – the ending (Odysseus will come home), and sets the action in motion in the form of a divine council in which Odysseus’ return is decided. At this point, however, he launches a major retardation†: the Telemachy, Telemachus’ meeting with Athena, private and public confrontations with the Suitors, and visits to Nestor in Pylos and Menelaus in Sparta (Books 1–4). Not until Book 5 will he return to his main hero, Odysseus. The briefing on Odysseus provides the narratees with more knowledge than Telemachus has; not until 4.556–60 will he learn what they knew all along, namely that Odysseus is with Calypso.

Deemed suspect by Analysts, the Telemachy is in fact well motivated.† In the first place there is the actorial motivation† of Athena, the goddess who involves Telemachus in the story: she wants him to win kleos (94–5n.). Telemachus’ trip abroad is comparable to the youthful exploits of Nestor (II. 11.670–762) and Odysseus (Od. 19.393–466 and 21.13–38), and indeed to Odysseus’ own Wanderings.² Both father and son visit impressive palaces, converse for some time with their hosts before identifying themselves (cf. Introduction to 4), and meet with overzealous hosts (cf. Introduction to 15); cf. also 2.332–3 (the fates of father and son are explicitly compared) and 16.17–21 (in a simile Telemachus is cast in the role of a wanderer like

Odysseus). His search for news about his father is also a search for confirmation of his identity as Odysseus’ son; various characters will remark upon his resemblance to his father (cf. 206–12n.). When he returns, *Telemachus has matured and is ready to assist his father in the revenge scheme.

The first narratorial motivation † is to introduce the Ithacan cast, which is to occupy the stage in the second half of the story: Telemachus, the Suitors, Penelope, Laertes, Phemius, and Euryclea. The only important figure not yet mentioned is Eumaeus. With the exception of the Suitors, these are the people Odysseus is longing to return to, and, having made their acquaintance, the narratees can well understand that longing. They also learn of the deplorable situation on Ithaca (a host of Suitors wooing Penelope, consuming Odysseus’ property, and threatening the life of his son, while the Ithacan population does not dare to stop them), which makes them share Athena’s desire to get Odysseus home; cf. 5.1–42n.

A second narratorial motivation is to introduce a theme † which runs through the whole Odyssey, viz. the comparison of Odysseus’ nostos with that of the other Greek heroes who fought before Troy, especially Agamemnon (32–43n.), Nestor (3.103–200n.), Menelaus (4.351–586n.), Ajax (4.499–511n.), and Achilles (11.482–91n.).³ When the story begins, it looks as if Odysseus’ nostos is the worst: he is the only one not yet to have returned. By the end, however, it will have become clear that his is the best: he at least has a nostos (unlike Achilles, who dies in Troy, and Ajax, who dies by drowning on his way home), which, because of its adventurous nature (unlike Nestor’s swift but uninteresting return) and the riches which he assembles (like Menelaus), brings him kleos (which Achilles himself proclaims better than his own martial kleos); he has a faithful wife (unlike Agamemnon and Menelaus); he is not killed in his own palace by the suitor of his wife (like Agamemnon), but rather kills her suitors; he finds his adult son at home and fights with him shoulder to shoulder against the Suitors (Achilles dies before he can see Neoptolemus in action on the battlefield, Menelaus has no son by Helen, and Agamemnon is killed before he can greet Orestes).

A third narratorial motivation is to initiate the characterization of *Odysseus: people talk about him and recount anecdotes about him,

notably Athena (1.257–64), Nestor (3.118–29), Helen (4.240–64), and Menelaus (4.266–89).

Book 1 covers the first day of the Odyssey (cf. Appendix A), which brings a divine council (26–95), Athena’s meeting with Telemachus (96–324), and a scene in which Telemachus first asserts himself as the young master of the house in meetings with his mother and the Suitors (325–444).

1–10 The opening of the Odyssey is marked explicitly (in contrast to its implicit ending, 23.296n.), in a way which is typical of oral narratives, viz. by calling attention to the act of storytelling and thereby marking the transition from the real world to the story world. It takes the form of an invocation of the Muse, which is marked off by ring-composition †: μοι έννεπε, Μοίσσα = θεά . . . εἰτέ καὶ ήμιν. The structure of the proem resembles that of the Iliad (and cf. 326–7; 8.492–5; 9.37–8; 11.382–4): substantive in the accusative, which indicates the subject of the story; verb of speaking; vocative; adjective and relative clause, which further define the subject; δέ-clauses, which give some idea of the action to come; and an indication of the starting point. On closer inspection, however, there are also striking differences: the indication of the subject is vague (‘the man’ instead of ‘the anger of Achilles’); the starting point is unspecified (‘from some point onwards’ instead of the precise indication ‘from the very moment when the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon started’); and mention is made of a specific episode, the ‘Helius’ incident (6–9n.). In addition, the events mentioned in the proem of the Iliad have yet to take place when the story begins, whereas those of the Odyssey already belong to the past.

The proem also introduces the agents involved in the presentation of the story: the narrator (μοι), the narratees (present, together with the narrator, in ήμιν; cf. II. 2.486), and the Muse. The Odyssean narrator is (i) external, i.e., he does not himself play a role in the story he is recounting; (ii) omniscient, i.e., he knows how his story will end and has access to the inner thoughts of his characters; (iii) omnipresent; (iv) undramatized, i.e., we hear nothing about his personality; and (v) covert, i.e., apart from the proem, he does not refer to his own activities as a narrator and focalizer and rarely – but more often than the Iliadic narrator – openly expresses judgements (*narratorial interventions). Despite his invisibility, his influence is great:

we move through the story with the narrator ‘constantly at our elbow, controlling rigorously our beliefs, our interests, and our sympathies’. The narratees likewise are undramatized and nowhere explicitly addressed by the narrator; yet they are indispensable as the narrator’s silent partners, the object of narrative devices such as misdirection or dramatic irony.

His invocation of the Muse characterizes the narrator as a professional singer, comparable to Phemius and Demodocus. Singers are said to be ‘taught/loved’ by the Muses (cf. 8.63–4n.) and they claim that the Muses are actively involved in their singing (cf. 1.1: ‘Muse, tell me about the man’). The relation between narrator and Muse is best understood in terms of double motivation: both god and mortal are involved (cf. 22.347–8n.). Rather than turning the narrator into the mouthpiece of the Muse, the invocation of the Muse subtly enhances his status; the gods assist only those who, by their own merits, deserve to be assisted. The Muse’s cooperation guarantees the ‘truth’ of his story, which in fact contains a great deal of invention (cf. 8.487–91n.), and her teaching/gift of song camouflages the tradition and training which must in fact be the basis for his song. After the proem the Muses will no longer be invoked (as they are in the Iliad). In comparison to the Iliad, the narrator of the Odyssey is more self-conscious, advertising his own profession and song in various subtle ways: of the many ‘nostos’ songs (cf. 325–7n.), he offers the ‘latest’ (8.74n.), which is always liked best (351–2n.); he presents an idealized picture of his profession in the singers Phemius and Demodocus (Introduction to 8); and compares his main hero to a singer (11.363–9n.).

The stress put on the magnitude of the subject (thrice repeated θόλο-) is typical of openings (cf. 7.241–3; 9.3–15; 14.192–8; and II. 1.2–3); it serves to win the attention of the narratees. The fact that Odysseus has wandered and suffered much will be stressed throughout the Odyssey, and, when voiced by Odysseus, it will serve as a form of self-identification; cf. 16.205–6n.

The opening with ὅνδρα indicates that the Odyssey is not just a story about the individual Odysseus and his nostos, but about Odysseus as ‘man’, i.e., leader, husband, father, son, master, and king.

---

Whenever we find verse-initial ἐνδρα, it refers anaphorically to Odysseus (here; 8.139; 10.74; 13.89; 24.266) or else he is invoked, even though the reference is general or concerns another person.

The epithet πολύτροπος, which combines an active (‘with many turns of the mind’) and a passive (‘much tossed about’) sense, is used (here and in 10.330) only for Odysseus, who, in general, has many πολυ-epithets (πολύαινος, ‘of many tales’, πολυφρόνος, ‘much prayed for’, πολύμητις, ‘of many devices’, πολυμήχανος, ‘of many resources’, πολύτλος, ‘much enduring’, πολύφρων, ‘highly ingenious’). It therefore immediately identifies the man as Odysseus, while the information provided in the sequel (long wanderings, Helius’ cattle, Calypso, Ithaca, and Poseidon’s wrath) also points to him. Nevertheless, his name will not be mentioned until 21. The suppression of Odysseus’ name is a common Odyssean motif: cf. 96–324n. (Telemachus speaking); 5.43–148n. (Hermes and Calypso); Introduction to 14 (Eumaeus); and 24.216–349n. (‘the stranger’ and Laertes). By inserting this motif into his proem, the narrator signals his story’s preoccupation with (the concealing of) names; cf. also the *delayed recognition* story-pattern.

6 Concern for his men is characteristic of Odysseus.

6–9 The narrator mentions the episode of Helius’ cattle (told in full in 12.260–425), because (i) it is of thematic relevance (the ἀτασθαλίσσαν, ‘reckless behaviour’, of Odysseus’ companions connects them to Aegisthus and the Suitors; cf. 32–43n.), and (ii) it is the adventure in which Odysseus loses his last companions, after which he is alone. The narrator will begin his story after this major caesura.

This is one of the places where the narrator authenticates Odysseus’ Apologue; cf. Introduction to 9.

10 The suggestion of an arbitrary beginning (‘from some point onwards’) is a rhetorical ploy. In general, the starting point of songs is a conscious choice (cf. 8.73–82n.), and in the specific case of the Odyssey the point of attack, i.e., the starting point of the main story † as opposed to the fabula †, is chosen very carefully. The story begins in medias res; compare the Iliad

and Demodocus’ song of the Wooden Horse (8.499–520) and contrast the *ab ovo* life stories of Eumaeus (15.403–84) and ‘the stranger’/Odysseus (14.192–359). Thus it begins when Odysseus is destined to return home at last (16–18), in the twentieth year of his absence (2.175), the third year of the Suitors’ ‘siege’ of his palace (2.89–90), at the moment Telemachus has come of age (296–7). All that precedes this starting point will be presented in the form of embedded stories, above all Odysseus’ long *Apologue* (Books 9–12).

For the fabula of the *Odyssey*, cf. Appendix A.

11–26 The transition to the opening scene of the story is different from that in the *Iliad* (1.8–16). There the narrator spirals back in time (starting from Achilles’ wrath mentioned in the proem until he reaches the start of the sequence of events leading up to it); here he moves forward in time (continuing from where he left off in the proem, the moment when Odysseus lost all his companions): Odysseus is with *Calypso – the year has come for him to return, but though the other gods pity him, he has still not returned because of Poseidon’s wrath – now Poseidon is away and the other gods are assembled (in other words, an ideal situation for the stalemate around Odysseus’ return to be broken and the action to begin).  

11–15 An instance of the ‘*(all) the others . . ., but X (alone) . . .’* motif; cf. 2.82–4; 4.285–7; 5.110–11 = 133–4; 6.138–40; 7.251–3; 8.93–4 = 532–3, 234–5; 11.526–30, 541–6; 14.478–82; 16.393–8; 17.503–4; 20.109–10; 22.42–4; 24.173–5 (and the variant in 17.411–12). This motif serves to focus pathetically (here) or negatively (in most of the other instances) on the situation or activity of one person. In the case of Odysseus, ὀινός, ‘alone’, has a two-fold significance: he is the only Trojan war veteran who has not yet returned and the only survivor of the ‘Helius’ incident (cf. 5.131; 7.249). On Ithaca he will again be ‘alone’ (μοῦνος), one man facing a multitude of Suitors; cf. 16.117–21n.

13 Odysseus’ desire to return home is specified in several places, the emphasis depending on the situation:17 longing for Penelope (here, to contrast with Calypso’s longing to make him her husband: 15; 5.209–10), Ithaca (57–9; 9.27–36), his palace (7.225), his servants (7.225), or his parents (9.34–6).

16–18 The first of *many prolepses of Odysseus’ return. The Homeric narrator tends to disclose beforehand the outcome of his story or part of it,

---

17 Stanford (1965).
an outcome which is often known to the narratees anyway, because the core – but no more than that – of the story was part of the tradition. This does not, however, mean that there is no suspense:  

(i) the how and when of the dénouement are not disclosed (in the present instance, the narratees are not told how Odysseus is going to come home); (ii) the narratees can temporarily ‘forget’ their prior knowledge and identify with one of the characters, who have a much more restricted vision (e.g., when in Book 5 the shipwrecked Odysseus is convinced that he is going to drown); (iii) the narrator can create false expectations (misdirection †, e.g., concerning Arete’s rôle in Book 7); (iv) the expected outcome can be delayed (retardation †, e.g., in Book 19, when the narratees expect to see husband and wife reunited); and (v) even real surprises are not excluded (e.g., when in Book 22 Odysseus uses the bow of the shooting contest to kill the Suitors).

It is Odysseus’ fate (ἐπέκλωσαντό) to return home; cf. 5.41–2, 113–15; 9.532–5; 11.139; and 13.132–3; and cf. also 2.174–6 (Halitherses’ prophecy at the moment of his departure); 11.113–15 (Tiresias’ conditional prophecy); and 13.339–40 (Athena’s remark that she always knew he would come home). His Wanderings are also fated; cf. 9.507–12 (meeting with Polyphemus); 10.330–2 (meeting with Circe); and 5.288–9 (stay with the Phaeacians). In a sense, Homeric fate is the tradition, the elements of the ‘Odysseus’ story which are given. In part Odysseus incurs his fate himself (not by committing a ‘sin’, but by making the mistake of blinding Polyphemus and thereby incurring the wrath of Poseidon; cf. 9.551–5n.), and in part he shares in the misery brought on by others (the wraths of Athena and of Helius; cf. 1.19–21n.); but above all he must simply endure his allotted portion of suffering (cf. 9.37–8: ‘Zeus made my nostos full of sorrows from the very moment I left Troy’). In the council of the gods which opens the story Athena will advance the argument that he has now suffered enough and is in danger of exceeding his allotted portion, something which Aegisthus deserves but not Odysseus.

19 φίλος, ‘dear’, ‘friend’, belongs to the character-language †: 132 times in speech, twice in embedded focalization (13.192; II. 19.378), and twice in simple narrator-text (here; II. 24.327). The word adds to the pathos with which the narrator describes Odysseus’ plight: all the others are at home,

free from the toils of war and travel, but Odysseus, when the year has come for him to come home, even then is not free from toils and back among his philoi.\textsuperscript{20}

19–21 In the \textit{Odyssey} there are several instances of the ‘divine anger’ motif\textsuperscript{21}: the wrath of Athena, striking all the Greeks on their return home from Troy (cf. 325–7n.); of Helius, striking Odysseus’ companions in the third year of their return home (cf. 12.260–425n.); and of Poseidon (\textit{bis}), hitting Locrian Ajax (4.499–511) and Odysseus.

Poseidon’s wrath against Odysseus originates from the latter’s blinding of his son Polyphemus (9.526–36 and 11.101–3); it prevents him from returning home (1.19–21, 68–75); and when the ban on his return is finally lifted, it postpones that return once again by shipwrecking him before the coast of Scheria (5.279–387). In 6.329–31 the narratees are reminded that Poseidon is still angry, and indeed in 13.125–87 he punishes the Phaeacians for bringing Odysseus home. The wrath comes to its prescribed end, when Odysseus has come home (cf. 1.20–1; 6.330–1; 9.532–5). It has an epilogue in the form of Odysseus’ ‘pilgrimage’ after his return to Ithaca (11.119–31).

22–6 The Ethiopians offer a conventional means of motivating a god’s absence (cf. \textit{Il.} 1.423–4). It is only when Poseidon is ‘far away’ – the detailed description of the Ethiopians’ location, which occurs only here, stresses this crucial fact twice: τηλόθ’, ἔχστοι – that Athena dares to bring up Odysseus’ case. For her circumspection towards her uncle Poseidon, cf. 6.323–31n.

26–95 The first council of the gods. In the \textit{Iliad} divine scenes abound; the \textit{Odyssey} has only five instances: three plenary sessions (here, 5.1–42, and 12.376–90) and two dialogues between Zeus and one other god (13.125–58 and 24.472–88). This council has three functions: (i) practical: it starts off the action, by breaking the stalemate around Odysseus’ return (cf. 11–26n.); (ii) structuring: it informs the narratees about the first stages of the story to follow (cf. 81–95n.); and (iii) expositional: it amplifies the narrator’s earlier brief remarks on Odysseus’ stay with *Calypso (14–15), and Poseidon’s anger (20–1).

The dialogue displays the domino form\textsuperscript{†}, which allows for the introduction of an unexpected topic at the end:

\textsuperscript{20} In this interpretation the semicolon after δέθλαν should be removed.

Athena’s plans (D’–E) will be executed in reverse order †: first, she goes to Telemachus and sets in motion a chain of actions (Books 1–4), and then, after a new divine council, Hermes visits Calypso (Book 5); for the effectiveness of this order, cf. 5.1–42n.

This scene shows us Athena for the first time in her role of Odysseus’ helper. Whereas in the Iliad many of the gods regularly intervene in the action, in the Odyssey only this goddess is active. Athena earlier supported Odysseus during the Trojan war (3.218–24, 13.300–1, 314–15, 387–91; 20.47–8) and, as she herself explains, she helps him because of his intelligence and shrewdness (cf. 13.221–440). During his Wanderings she did not help him, for her own private reasons; cf. 6.323–31n.

So much for the actorial motivation † of Athena’s constant support. But there are also narratorial motivations †. (i) Athena’s interventions turn her into an instrument of the narrator in the orchestration of his story.23 (ii) The repeated revelation of her plans and intentions in the form of embedded focalization †, informs the narratees about the course which the story is going to take; cf. 3.77–8n. (iii) Her unfailing support encourages the narratees to sympathize with Odysseus (even at the moment he takes his bloody revenge) and to side with him against the Suitors; cf. 224–9n.

29–31 Zeus’s opening speech is preceded by embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘he recalled’), which informs the narratees in advance about its topic; cf. 4.187–9; 5.5–6; 10.35–6; 14.51–2. Zeus recalls the demise of Aegisthus, because it took place three years ago; cf. Appendix A.

32–43 The narrator springs a surprise on his narratees. Aegisthus is the subject of the opening speech by Zeus, not Odysseus. Only Athena, exploiting Poseidon’s absence and deftly seizing on the opening offered by Zeus, will change the subject to Odysseus. However, Zeus’s general statement about reckless behaviour and the ‘Oresteia’ story are also of prime relevance to Odysseus.

The root \( \text{ταισθαλ-} \), which belongs to the character-language (twenty-eight times in direct speech, once in simple narrator-text: 1.7, and once in embedded focalization: 21.146), is used in the Odyssey mainly of Odysseus’ companions (7; 12.300), Aegisthus (here), and the Suitors (fifteen times). It indicates outrageous or reckless behaviour, which breaks social or religious rules, and which people pursue despite specific warnings: the companions slaughter Helius’ cattle, although they have been warned by Odysseus (who is himself warned by Circe and Tiresias); Aegisthus seduces Clytemnestra, although warned by Hermes; and the Suitors woo Penelope, although warned by several people, including two seers. Their own behav- iour brings them more suffering than is their portion. This marks a departure from the ‘random apportioning of luck and disaster’ principle, which governs the lives of most people; cf., e.g., 348–9; 4.236–7; 6.188–9; 14.444–5; and II. 24.527–33. The narrator has Zeus introduce this selective moralism for narrative purposes: it is one of the strategies he uses to make Odysseus’ bloody revenge on the Suitors acceptable; cf. 224–9n.25

The ‘Oresteia’ story is an embedded story, which is referred to repeatedly in the Odyssey, by different characters, to different addressees, and for different reasons: Zeus to the assembled gods (here), ‘Mentes’/Athena to Telemachus (298–302n.), Nestor to Telemachus (3.193–200 and 254–316nn.), ‘Mentor’/Athena to Telemachus (3.232–5n.), Menelaus to Telemachus (4.91–2n.), Proteus to Menelaus (4.512–49n.), Agamemnon to Odysseus (11.409–56n.), Odysseus to Athena (13.383–5n.), Agamemnon to Achilles (24.95–7n.), and Agamemnon apostrophizing Odysseus (24.191–202n.). The story of Agamemnon’s nostos, which is one of many ‘nostos’ stories, is the most important foil for Odysseus’ nostos; cf. Introduction. As a rule, Agamemnon

parallels Odysseus, Clytemnestra Penelope, Orestes Telemachus, and Aegisthusthe Suitors; the story is ‘a warning to Odysseus, an inspiration for Telemachus, and a vindication of Penelope’.27

The main elements of the Odyssean ‘Oresteia’ story are as follows: Aegisthus marries Clytemnestra during Agamemnon’s absence, Agamemnon is killed by the two lovers upon his return, after seven years Orestes returns and kills Aegisthuss. In comparison with later versions outside the *Odyssey*, there are omissions (the Atreus–Thyestes feud, the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in Aulis, Orestes’ pursuit by the Erinyes); additions (Hermes’ warning to Aegisthus); shifts of accent (Orestes’ matricide is nowhere mentioned explicitly, once hinted at: 3.309–10); and variants (Agamemnon killed during a feast, not in bath), which all serve to tailor this embedded story to the particular context of the *Odyssey*.

Zeus tells the ‘Oresteia’ story to illustrate his general proposition in 32–4 (‘argument’ function †). The most space is taken up by the warning of Hermes, whose words are even quoted directly from 40 onwards, so as to give them more emphasis. This – unique – detail serves Zeus’s argument (Aegisthus might have escaped his excessive suffering, if he had heeded the warning), but also suggests the story’s ‘key’ function †: Aegisthus’ fate foreshadows that of the Suitors, who will likewise receive warnings which they disregard, and who in the end will fall victim to revenge. The connection with the Suitors is underscored by a reference to Aegisthus’ seduction of Clytemnestra as ‘wooing’ (μνάσσει Mai: 39 and cf. μνηστην in 36). Although the Suitors have not been mentioned yet, their wooing of Penelope in Odysseus’ absence may be regarded as part of the core of the ‘Odysseus’ story and thereby part of the narratees’ prior knowledge; one indication of this is the fact that we hear of ‘the Suitors’ tout court many times (from the narrator: 114, 116, 118, 133, 144, 151, 154, and Athena: 91) before Telemachus tells who they are (245–51). The link with the Suitors also explains why Zeus focuses on Aegisthus, paying no attention to Clytemnestra. The figure of Orestes, who in all other instances of the ‘Oresteia’ story is linked to Telemachus, here has an ambiguous status: his coming of age and the unique epithet τηλεκλαυτός, ‘far-famed’ (30), recall Telemachus (cf. 296–7n.); his longing for his own country, however, recalls homesick Odysseus (cf. 57–9, 5.153, and 209). The ambiguity may reflect

27 Clarke (1967: 10).
the fact that Odysseus and Telemachus will together carry out the act of revenge.

46–7 Athena’s threatening words ‘may everyone die who does things like that’ may be interpreted by the narratees as directed at the Suitors; cf. her exhortation of Telemachus in 295–302, which explicitly links the murders of Aegisthus and the Suitors. This is the first – veiled – *prolepsis † of Odysseus’ revenge.

48–62 In describing Odysseus’ unhappiness Athena uses words which echo his name and in the Odyssey refer mainly to him: δυσμόρφω, ‘unlucky’ (49; five out of six Odyssean instances concern Odysseus), δύστηνον, ‘miserable’ (55; fifteen out of seventeen instances), ὀδυρόμενον, ‘weep’ (55; twenty-seven out of thirty-nine instances), and ὀδύσσεο, ‘are angry’ (62; all five instances): the ‘nomen est omen’ principle.

51 The description of Calypso’s island as ‘rich in trees’ (51) is a seed †: later Odysseus will use these trees to build a raft (5.238–40).

57 *Calypso tries to make Odysseus ‘forget’ Ithaca. The ‘forgetting/remembering’ motif is of prime importance in the Odyssey, since these are the determining factors of Odysseus’ return: Odysseus must remember his home and wife, when the Lotus-Eaters (9.96–7), Circe (10.236, 472), the Sirens (12.41–5), and Calypso try to make him forget; the gods must not forget Odysseus (65; 5.5–6), the Ithacans their king (2.233–4; 4.687–95; 5.11–12), and Penelope her husband (343–4; 24.195); cf. also the (ironic) variant in 21.94–5.

57–9 Here Odysseus’ desire to return focuses on Ithaca; cf. 13n. *Smoke regularly is the first sign of human habitation seen by a traveller.

59 For Odysseus becoming so despondent as to wish to die, cf. 10.49–52 and 496–9.

59–62 Athena’s three final questions † are an indirect reproach: Zeus is not behaving justly towards pious Odysseus. At the same time, her questions are a rhetorical trick: of course, she knows that it is Poseidon, not Zeus, who is responsible for Odysseus’ plight. But her feigned ignorance forces Zeus to articulate and thereby rethink his position. Other instances of suggestive questions are 206–12, 224–9; and 16.95–8.

28 Scholion ad 47. 29 Rank (1951: 51–2).
31 In view of the similar structure of the three cola, it seems better to read a question mark after ὅλυμπει in 60 (with Von der Mühll and Van Thiel) instead of a full stop (Allen).
64–75 In the first part of his speech Zeus mirrors the structure of the last part of Athena’s speech:

Athena 48–62 Odysseus marooned on the island of Calypso
(digression) Calypso’s pedigree
Odysseus marooned
Don’t you remember his sacrifices?
Zeus 64–75 How could I forget his sacrifices?
(‘catch-word’ technique †: ἵρᾳ in 66 picking up ἴρᾳ in 61)
Poseidon is angry at him because of Polyphemus
(digression) Polyphemus’ pedigree
Poseidon is angry at him

In this way Zeus emphasizes that he is countering Athena’s reproach, placing even his digression in answer to hers: if Calypso’s connection to ‘malign’ Atlas adds to the bleak picture Athena paints of Odysseus’ situation, Polyphemus’ connection to Poseidon justifies the latter’s anger towards Odysseus. Zeus here claims to have clean hands, but in fact he has actively supported *Poseidon’s wrath; cf. 9.551–5n.

68–75 The ‘Cyclops’ episode will be told in full in 9.106–566. This is one of the places where Odysseus’ Apologue is authenticated; cf. Introduction to 9.

77–9 Zeus’s confident announcement that Poseidon will give up his wrath is an instance of misdirection †: it leads the narratees to expect that the god will now not intervene, whereas in fact he does; cf. 19–21n. His shipwrecking of Odysseus in Book 5 will bring about a retardation † of Odysseus’ nostos, announced so emphatically at the opening of the story (cf. νόστον: 5, 13, 77, 87, 94; νόστιμον: 9; νέεσθαι/ήται: 17, 87; νοστήσαντα/-σαι: 36, 83).

81–95 In the Homeric epics we regularly find ‘table of contents’ speeches, which inform the narratees about what to expect next, e.g., Zeus’s speech in 5.29–42 (which delineates Books 5–12) and Athena’s speech in 13.393–415 (Books 14–15). Here, Athena’s speech delineates the events of Books 1–5: the encouragement of Telemachus in Book 1; the Ithacan assembly in Book 2; Telemachus’ visit to Nestor in Pylos and to Menelaus in Sparta in Books 3–4; Hermes’ mission in Book 5.

Athena’s speech introduces a new storyline: from now on there is an ‘Odysseus’ storyline and a ‘Telemachus–Ithaca’ storyline; cf. Appendix B. After her speech the ‘Odysseus’ storyline will be dropped until Book 5. We leave it while it is in a state of suspense: Odysseus’ return has been decided, but not carried out. By the time we return to the ‘Odysseus’ storyline, so much text-time has elapsed that a new divine council is needed; cf. 5.1–42n. The narratees will be reminded of the ‘Odysseus’ storyline in the background through numerous references to ‘absent Odysseus’: characters speculate about his whereabouts, whether he is alive or not, and his impending return.34

94–5 Athena reveals her intentions in sending Telemachus on his trip (cf. Introduction): he is to collect information about his father and gain *kleos, ‘fame’ (95).35 In effect, however, the second purpose is the more important one, as becomes clear in 13.417–28, when Odysseus asks Athena the obvious question – why she did not simply tell Telemachus where his father was – and she answers that making the trip brings him kleos. The reactions of Euryclea (2.361–70), the Suitors (4.638–40, 663–4), Penelope (4.703–67), Odysseus (13.416–9), and Eumaeus (14.178–82) make clear that Telemachus’ trip is indeed a heroic enterprise; it takes courage to face the dangers of the sea and to address famous heroes. Athena will also predict kleos for Telemachus when he kills the Suitors (298–305). This promise is all the more welcome since Telemachus complains that due to the unheroic death of his father, he is deprived of kleos (237–41; cf. Eumaeus in 14.67–71).

96–324 The arrival of a ‘stranger’ is a common motif to set the action into motion; cf. the arrival of Chryses in Il. 1.12ff.36 Athena’s meeting with Telemachus is an instance of a ‘god meets mortal’ scene: a god talks to a mortal, usually assuming a mortal disguise, and sometimes reveals at the end of the meeting his/her divine identity, in words or through a supernatural departure (epiphany); cf. 2.267–97, 382–7; 3.1–485; 7.18–81; 8.193–200; 10.277–308; 13.221–440, 16.155–77; 22.205–40; and 24.502–48.37 For gods conversing with mortals in their dreams, cf. 4.795–841n. For gods appearing directly to mortals, cf. 13.312–13n. ‘God meets mortal’ scenes are usually full of ambiguity † on the part of the god in disguise, and dramatic irony † on the part of the unsuspecting mortal. The

present instance bears some resemblance to the *‘delayed recognition’* story-pattern: Telemachus spontaneously starts talking about something which is relevant to the unrecognized guest (158–77) and the unrecognized guest tells a lying tale (179–212).

The ‘masks’ put on by Homeric gods when dealing with human beings are always carefully chosen. Here Athena adopts the identity of the Taphian Mentes,\(^38\) an old guest-friend of Odysseus (hence sympathetic to his cause, and able to recount to Telemachus a youthful exploit of his father and to note the son’s likeness to his father), and a member of a nation of pirates, cf. 15.427; 16.426 (hence able to produce a likely hypothesis as to why Odysseus has not yet returned), who lives sufficiently far away from Ithaca to look at the situation with fresh eyes (his shocked reaction will form an effective stimulus to bring Telemachus into action).

‘Mentes’/Athena is the first in a series of helpers who assist Telemachus: he is replaced in Book 2 by ‘Mentor’/Athena, who leaves the youth in 3.371–3, to be succeeded by Nestor’s son Pisistratus in 3.482, who takes his leave in 15.215–16. After this, Telemachus is reunited with his father.

The meeting takes the form of a *‘visit’ type-scene*:\(^39\) a visitor (i) sets off (96–102; here expanded by a ‘dressing’ type-scene); (ii) arrives at his destination (103–5); (iii) finds the person(s) he is looking for (106–12); (iv) is received by his host (113–35); (v) is given a meal (136–50); (vi) converses with his host (151–318); (in the case of an overnight stay) (vii) is bathed; is given (viii) a bed, (ix) a guest-gift (309–18n.), and sometimes also (x) an escort to the next destination, *pompe* (cf. 3.317–28). Other instances are 3.4–469 (Telemachus: Nestor); 4.1–624 + 15.1–182 (Telemachus: Menelaus); 5.49–148 (Hermes: Calypso); 7.14–13.69 (Odysseus: Phaeacians); 9.195–542 (Odysseus: Cyclops); 10.1–79 (Odysseus: Aeolus); 208–466 (Odysseus: Circe); 14.1–533 (Odysseus: Eumaeus); 16.1–155 (Telemachus: Eumaeus); Introduction to 17 (Odysseus: Suitors); and 24.205–412n. (Odysseus: Laertes). Hospitality is a matter of prime importance in the *Odyssey* and the ‘visit’ scenes are to this story what the ‘battle’ scenes are to the *Iliad*. They feature good hosts (Nestor, Eumaeus), ambivalent hosts (the Phaeacians), bad hosts (the Cyclops and the Suitors), over-zealous hosts (Calypso and Menelaus), and frustrated hosts (Telemachus). Athena’s visit in Book 1\(^40\)


displays a number of anomalous features (pointed out ad locc.), which are the result of her divine status and the presence of the Suitors in Odysseus’ palace.

Throughout the conversation with ‘Mentes’/Athena, Telemachus will not once refer to his father by his proper name or ‘father’, but only by ‘him’ (*κρύος: 163, 235, 243; ὅ: 166, 168, 215, 220, 239; μὲν: 241) or ‘a/that man’ (161, 233). In Telemachus’ case the *‘suppression of Odysseus’ name’ motif reflects his uncertainty about himself and his father. Contrast ‘Mentes’/Athena’s lavish use of ‘Odysseus’ (196, 207, 212, 253, 260, 265) and ‘your father’ (195, 281, 287), which brings home to him that there really is a man called Odysseus and that he really is Telemachus’ father. One of the effects of her visit will be that Telemachus does speak of ‘Odysseus’ (354, 396, 398) and ‘my father’ (413).

96–101 Athena’s departure on this important mission is given extra weight through the insertion of a *‘dressing’ type-scene (cf. Hermes in 5.44–8). She does not dress like a female, but puts on the same ‘magic’ sandals as Hermes (cf. 5.44–6) and, just as Hermes takes along his magic wand, she takes with her her spear. This is her attribute when she arms herself in martial contexts (cf. Il. 5.745–7). In the present, peaceful context it suits the male character she will be impersonating; cf. the explicit mention in 104, 121, and 127–9. The ominous overtones of the description of the spear also alert the narratees to the fact that her rousing of Telemachus is the first step on the road towards Odysseus’ revenge, which will take the form of a battle; cf. also 126–9n.

102–4 The change of scene †, from Olympus to Odysseus’ palace on Ithaca, takes the form of the narrator following in the footsteps of Athena.

103–4 Noting that Athena arrived ‘at Odysseus’ doors’ the narrator reminds us that despite Odysseus’ absence and the noisy presence of the Suitors, this is still Odysseus’ palace. Though there is only one Ithacan palace in the Odyssey and a reference to ‘the palace’ would suffice, the narrator seldom foregoes an opportunity to speak of ‘Odysseus’ palace’: 2.259, 394; 4.625, 674, 715, 799; 16.328; 17.167; 20.122, 248; 21.4; 22.143, 495; 24.416, and 440; and cf. 21.5–62n.

In typical Homeric manner, the scenery †, Odysseus’ palace,41 is not described systematically (and any attempt at exact reconstruction is

---

therefore doomed to failure). Certain parts are mentioned when required by the story: the courtyard (in which the Suitors amuse themselves), the megaron (in which the main confrontations take place), Telemachus’ bedroom, Penelope’s upper room (to which she has retired so as to associate as little as possible with the Suitors), storerooms (e.g., the one where Odysseus’ bow lies: 21.5–62), the doors of the megaron (preventing the Suitors from escaping during the massacre; cf. Introduction to 22), and the threshold of the megaron (Odysseus’ station both as a beggar and as an avenger; cf. 17.339–41n.). The closest we get to an overall impression is in 17.260–73n., where the disguised Odysseus himself describes his palace.

106–12 Arriving at his destination, the Homeric visitor finds – and focalizes (cf. 5.63–75n.) – the person(s) he is looking for while they are engaged in some activity.42 Here we have a – unique – variant (Athena finds not Telemachus, but the Suitors), which immediately brings home what is wrong in Odysseus’ household: the Suitors are in a place where Telemachus should be.

The activities engaged in by the persons found often characterize them or are contextually significant; cf. 3.4–67; 14.5–28nn. Here the Suitors are playing a game, while servants prepare a meal; throughout the story they will be seen amusing themselves with dance and sport (cf. 421–2 = 18.304–5; 4.625–7 = 17.167–9), and eating (cf. 144–9; 2.299–300, 322, 396; 17.170–82, 260–71; 20.122–62, 250–83, 390). The repeated picture of the Suitors eating43 makes visible one of their *crimes; they are literally consuming Odysseus’ property (cf. 245–51n.). It is only fitting that they will ultimately be killed during a meal. This event is prepared for in the ‘dis-turbed meal’ motif: conscious or unconscious anticipations of or stories about people being killed during a meal;44 cf. 2.244–51; 17.219–20; 18.400–4; 20.392–4; 21.295–304, and 428–30nn. Cf. also Odysseus’ foil Agamemnon being killed during a banquet (4.512–49n.). Against this background, the detail that the Suitors were seated on the hides of oxen ‘which they themselves slaughtered’ (108) becomes a negatively charged piece of information.

106 διήνωρ, ‘manly’, ‘arrogant’, belongs to the character-language †: thirty-one times in direct speech, four times in embedded focalization

113–35 This is a fairly regular version of the reception of a guest: the guest (a) waits at the door (cf. 103–4), (b) is seen by his host (113–18, here expanded with a description of the host’s state of mind), (c) who rises from his/her seat and/or hurries towards him (119–20a), (d) gives him a hand (120b–121a), takes his spear (121b; an addition), (e) speaks words of welcome (122–4), (f) leads him in (125), stores his spear (126–9; an addition), and (g) offers him a seat (130–5). Nevertheless, it displays one anomaly: Athena is seen by Telemachus, not – as is customary – by the persons she ‘found’ in 106–12, the Suitors. This is the first indication that the Suitors, who are too busy with themselves to notice the stranger at the door, are bad hosts; second indication will follow in 136–51n.

113–18 The first impression we get of Telemachus is of him sitting amongst the Suitors and daydreaming about his father’s return. This is not only typical of this character in the early stages of the story, it also makes clear that the youth is in a receptive mood for Athena’s message; cf. 15.7–8.

The characterization of Telemachus is largely implicit; only one character trait, his being ‘shrewd’, is explicitly revealed by the narrator’s constant use of the epithet πεπνυόμενος. He is the only Homeric character who develops in the course of the story. Throughout he is polite (he is angry when the stranger has to stand at the door for a long time: 119–20, and takes care to remove him from the noise caused by the Suitors, which might spoil his meal: 133–4), clever (he does not reveal the true identity of ‘Mentes’/Athena to the Suitors: 412–20), but has little sympathy for his enigmatic mother (cf. 345–59n.). However, at the beginning of the story he is still far removed from the heroic ideal of ‘a doer of deeds and speaker of words’ (Il. 9.443); thus he is inert (he merely dreams of a revenge on the Suitors: 115–17) and shy when approaching venerable men like Nestor and Menelaus (3.22–4; 4.158–60). However, just as Achilles had Phoenix, Telemachus meets with a series of helpers (cf. 96–324n.) and gradually develops his heroic potential. When the narratees meet him again after the

---

45 Scholion ad 1.113.

Telemachy, it will appear that his trip abroad has matured him; cf. Introduction to 15. For similarities with Nausicaa, cf. Introduction to 6.

This is the first time that Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors is mentioned explicitly (after indirect allusions in 46–7 and 99–101). The first four books of the Odyssey abound with prolepses of Odysseus’ revenge (tisis) on the Suitors (often in conjunction with *prolepses of his return): 253–69, 378–80; 2.143–207, 283–4; 3.205–9, 216–24; and 4.333–46nn. The cumulative effect of these anticipations, as voiced by Athena and venerable heroes like Nestor and Menelaus amongst others, is to bring home the fact that the Suitors’ fate is sealed and divinely authorized from the beginning. Thus the device of repeated prolepsis is one of the narrator’s strategies designed to make the bloody outcome of his story acceptable; cf. 224–9n. However, the prolepses often are no more than wishes, and the exact form of the revenge is left unspecified (cf. 1.296 = 11.120: ‘whether through a trick or openly’; 3.217: ‘whether alone or with many Greeks’). Only in the second half of the story will the narratees be informed gradually about the ‘how’ of Odysseus’ revenge; cf. 13.372–439n.

When he says that Telemachus saw ‘Athena’, the narrator intrudes into Telemachus’ focalization (paralepsis); Telemachus himself thinks he is dealing with a stranger (cf. the use of ξεινος in his speeches: 123, 158, 176, 214, and embedded focalization: 120, 133). The Homeric narrator always refers to characters in disguise (gods in human form, Odysseus in the guise of a beggar) by their own names: cf. in this scene the repeated ‘Athena’ in 125, 156, 178, 221, 252, 314, and 319. His main objective is to avoid confusion for the narratees (in a written text the adopted name can be put in inverted commas, as is done in this commentary); as a secondary effect, the dramatic irony of a situation is underscored (cf., e.g., 3.41–50n.).

Telemachus’ focalization triggers the use of ξεινος, which belongs to the character-language: 197 times in speech, seven times in embedded focalization (here, 133; 3.34; 7.227; 13.48; 20.374), and only thirteen times in simple narrator-text.

A ‘welcome’ speech; cf. 4.60–4; 5.87–91; 14.37–47; 16.23–9; and 17.41–4 (and cf. the variants in 13.356–60 and 24.386–411). Its typical elements are: greeting (χαίρε), invitation to enter, promise of a meal, and announcement (of the topic) of the after-dinner conversation.

47 Jones (1941) and Matsumoko (1981).
126–9 We hear again of a spear being placed against the wall in 17.29, but only here of a rack for spears. This detail allows the narrator to remind us once again of the rightful owner of the palace (cf. 103–4n.). The narratees may also see the symbolism of Telemachus placing the stranger’s spear – which from 99–101 they know to be Athena’s spear ‘with which she is wont to kill the men she is angry at’ – next to those of Odysseus; in Book 22 goddess and hero will fight side by side against the Suitors.

130–5 The typical element of offering a guest a seat is given an individual twist: Telemachus seats ‘Mentes’ at a distance from the Suitors, both out of embarrassed hospitality (he does not want his guest’s meal to be spoiled) and shrewdness (he wants to ask him about his father and keep any information for himself; cf. his whispering in 156–7 and dissimulation in 412–20).

Seating arrangements are always significant in the Odyssey: guests are given the place of honour next to the host (3.39, 469; 4.51; 7.169–71; and cf. 15.285–6); speakers about to embark on an intimate conversation sit opposite each other (5.198; 14.79; 16.53; 17.96; 23.89, 165); Telemachus, about to claim his position as Odysseus’ successor, takes the seat of his father in the Ithacan assembly (2.14), and sits next to his father’s friends in the marketplace (17.67–70); ‘the beggar’/Odysseus offers his own seat to Telemachus, who courteously declines (16.42–8); the bad servant Melanthius sits opposite Eurymachus (17.256–7), and the good servant Eumaeus next to Telemachus (17.328–35).

134 Telemachus’ focalization triggers the use of ὑπερφαίνως, ‘overbearing’, which belongs to the character-language †: twenty-two times in direct speech, five times in embedded focalization (here; 4.790; 13.373; 14.27; 20.12), once in simple narrator-text (20.291). In the Odyssey it is used mainly (sixteen times out of a total of nineteen occurrences) in reference to the Suitors.

136–51 The element of the meal displays another anomaly of Athena’s visit: instead of one, we find two separate meals: one of Telemachus and ‘the stranger’ (136–43) and one of the Suitors (144–51). The doubling is the logical result of the fact that Telemachus is keeping his guest at a distance from the Suitors (130–5), but at the same time it reveals their poor hospitality: they are too self-centred to bother about the guest (whom, as will be clear from 405–11, they did notice).

Telemachus offers the stranger a typical festive meal: (i) preparation (136–8) and (ii) serving (139–43). For the Suitors, the narrator turns to an

---

alternative formulation when describing the (i) preparation (144–8 and cf. 109–12). The (iii) consumption (149) and (iv) conclusion (150–1) are standard and here apply to both meals.

151–60 Listening to a singer is a common heroic after-dinner activity. In the case of the Suitors, however, there is an edge to it, as Telemachus points out: they are amusing themselves (and, as ἰτια suggests, enjoying the *ease of the divine lifestyle)⁵⁰ at another man’s expense. There is also a contrast between the carefree Suitors and worried Telemachus, a contrast which will acquire an ironic undertone when we hear what Phemius has been singing about during Telemachus’ conversation with Athena; cf. 325–7n.

Phemius is one of the two professional singers in the Odyssey who are referred to by name; cf. Introduction to 8. He is not blind, like Demodocus. He sings for the Suitors (here, 325–7; 17.358–9; and cf. 16.252), but, as the narrator says, ἀνάγκη, ‘by compulsion’, a fact which will become dramatically relevant in 22.344–53, when Phemius begs Odysseus to spare his life (cf. οὐ . . . ἄκων: 22.351, and ἀνάγκη: 22.353). Twice Telemachus intervenes in his favour (defending him against Penelope: 346–55; and Odysseus: 22.350–6) and, together with the herald Medon, he will be the only one to survive the slaughter of the Suitors (22.378–80); this will enable him to help Odysseus organize the hoax marriage ceremony (23.143–52).

156–318 The conversation between Athena and Telemachus⁵¹ is a typical example of the kind of intimate conversation we so often find in the Odyssey; cf. Intro to 19. The frequent use of deictic pronouns, which suggest gestures (ἡδ’: 185, ἰδ’: 225, 232, τάδε: 226), lends it an air of drama; cf. 6.148–85 and 13.221–440nn.

The structure of the conversation is as follows:

Telemachus (excuse) I hope you don’t blame me for what I want to say (158).
A These men [Suitors] are consuming the livestock of Odysseus (159–60),
B who is dead (161–8).
(transition formula) But tell me this (169):
C who are you? On which ship did you come? Are you perhaps a guest-friend of my father (170–7)?

Athena (opening formula) All right, I will tell you (179).
C’ I am Mentes. I came on my own ship. I am an old guest-friend of your father (180–95).

We see how Athena carefully leads the conversation in the direction she wants: she first lets Telemachus pour out all his griefs (the absence of his father, the presence of the Suitors, his uncertainty about his own identity, the hesitant behaviour of his mother), then heartens him (Odysseus will return, Telemachus looks like his father), only towards the end coming up with a detailed plan (anticipated in 90–5), which addresses all the points he mentioned.
156–7 Telemachus’ whispering is part of his strategy to keep the information given by the stranger for himself; cf. 130–5n. Other instances of whispering are 4.69–75 and 17.591–2.

158–77 Telemachus’ spontaneous outburst over Odysseus and the Suitors is an instance of the dramatic irony † of ‘bringing up a subject which is dear to the unrecognized guest’, which regularly occurs in delayed recognitions; cf. 96–324n.

158–68 The swing of Telemachus’ emotions between resignation and hope within the space of a few lines (the Suitors are eating the livestock of a man who is dead – if only he would come home, then he would rout them – but he is dead) is typical for the state of mind of Odysseus’ philoi; cf. 217–20, 232–6 + 237–41; 3.205–9; 14.61–8, 369–71; and 18.254–6 = 19.127–9. The narratees may note the dramatic irony † of Telemachus considering Odysseus’ return an unattainable wish, his death a sad reality. The same fluctuation recurs on a larger scale: Odysseus’ philoi now say that Odysseus is dead, then that he is alive; cf. 353–5n. (for Telemachus), 4.724–6n. (Penelope), and 14.42–4n. (Eumaeus). Contrast the opportunistic conviction that Odysseus is dead voiced by the Suitors and bad servants (e.g., 2.333; 17.253) and the sad resignation of Euryclea (2.365–6; 19.363–9) and Laertes (24.290–6).

161–2 For speculations about the state of Odysseus’ dead body, cf. 14.133–6n.

163 Telemachus refers to his father as κεϊνος (cf. 177), the pronoun used to refer to an absent person. As such it is the most appropriate pronoun for those at home to refer to Odysseus; indeed, fifty-nine out of a total of eighty-nine instances of (singular) κεϊνος/ἐκεϊνος in the Odyssey concern him.

166–8 The first instance of the ‘distrust’ motif:52 Odysseus’ philoi distrust messages of his return (here, 414–16; 14.122–30, 372–8), announcements of his return voiced by ‘the beggar’/Odysseus (see especially Eumaeus in Book 14 and Penelope in Book 19), and even the hero’s self-identification (cf. 16.4–219n.). The emotion underlying this distrust is a fear of being fobbed off (as has happened in the past: 14.126–30, 378–85), and, in the case of Penelope, also a fear of betraying Odysseus (if she were to sleep with an impostor: 23.215–24).

169–77 The identification of the guest53 is a vital part of a Homeric visit, in that it guarantees the host reciprocal hospitality in the future. Only gods

---

have no need of this ritual, because they always recognize each other (5.79–80). Homeric etiquette requires a host to offer his guest a meal before asking him his name (and business). Consummate hosts like Telemachus (1.123–4), Menelaus (4.60–2), and Eumaeus (14.45–7) set their guests at ease by explicitly assuring them that they will ask after their name and/or business only after dinner. The bad host Polyphemus, upon seeing the Greeks, immediately asks them who they are (9.251–5). The anxious hostess Calypso immediately asks Hermes about his business, but receives an answer only after he has eaten (5.85–96). The bad host Antinous does not bother to ask ‘the beggar’/Odysseus for his name at all (17.365–410). The normal moment for the identification is at the opening of the after-dinner conversation (cf. 3.69–74; 16.54–9; 19.105), but in the Odyssey it is often transposed. Thus here Telemachus first blurts out his own concerns (158–68), before asking the standard questions.

Since the identification is a stock ritual, the formulation used is largely standard, though speakers may use individual variations and additions. Telemachus first asks the stranger ‘who are you and where do you come from?’ (the international standard question, 170 = 10.325 = 14.187 = 15.264 = 19.105 = 24.298; and cf. 3.71); then ‘how did you get here, surely not on foot?’ (the local, i.e., Ithacan, standard question, 171–3 = 14.188–90 ≈ 16.57–9 ≈ 222–4); and finally ‘are you an old friend of my father’s?’ (a unique, personal question, prepared for by 135). For the narratees, who have just heard about Odysseus’ many wanderings in the proem, Telemachus’ statement that his father ‘used to go about among people’ is an understatement.

179–212 This is the first *lying tale of the Odyssey; cf. 96–324n. Having adopted a suitable personality (cf. 96–324n.), Athena carefully suppresses her *divine omniscience and plays the role of mortal: she only knows about Laertes’ condition from hearsay (189); she had expected to find Odysseus already at home (194); she guesses that he is ‘somewhere’ on an island (197) of ‘savage men’ (198), who ‘methinks’ keep him there against his will (199); she is no seer (202); and she asks whether Telemachus is indeed Odysseus’ son (206–7). The vagueness and partial incorrectness of Odysseus’ whereabouts also spare Telemachus’ feelings (savage men are more heroic and less shocking than an attractive woman) and leave enough for him to detect on the trip she is soon to suggest. At the same time, she manages to give Telemachus some true information, intended to lift his spirits: Odysseus is
alive and will soon return home (Athena’s ‘prophecy’ belongs to the mass of *prolepses † of Odysseus’ return). The narratees may savour the ambiguity † of ‘I will make you a prophecy exactly as the gods put it into my mind’ (200–1), and the aptness of ‘gods are impeding his passage’ (195) and ‘I haven’t seen Odysseus since the Trojan war’ (212; cf. 6.323–31n.).

179 When Odyssean characters stress the truth of their words, this often signals a lie;54 cf. 14.192; 16.61; 17.15, 108; 19.269; and 24.303.

188–93 Ostensibly backing up her claim to be an old guest-friend, Athena uses the opportunity to speak about Laertes.55 It is likely that Telemachus knows about the situation in which his grandfather finds himself, but the goddess’ graphic evocation brings it home to him all the more sharply: the old man has retired to the country, where he suffers sorrow in the company of an old servant, who gives him food when he is exhausted, moving wearily in his orchard. In this way, Athena tries to fire Telemachus’ indignation; cf. her full – negative – description of the Suitors’ behaviour in 225–9. At the same time, this character, who does not enter the scene until Book 24, is introduced to the narratees, who are periodically reminded of him; cf. 4.735–54; 11.187–96; 15.353–7; 16.137–53; and 22.184–6nn.

205 The narrator has Athena play with one of Odysseus’ stock epithets, πολυμήχανος, which for once she uses predicatively.56 Cf. similar allusive wordplay in 17.511 and 20.195 (πολυπλάγκτων/ους); 18.319 (πολυτλέμων); 19.118 (πολυστόνων), and (concerning περίφρον Penelope) 326 (περίειμι νόσον καὶ ἔπιφρονα μήτιν, ‘I surpass in mind and shrewd counsel’).

206–12 Pretending to be uncertain whether Telemachus is Odysseus’ son allows Athena not only to stress the resemblance, but also to trigger an anxious reaction (214–20), which she can then allay (222–3); for the technique of suggestive questions, cf. 59–62n. Telemachus’ resemblance to Odysseus, both in his appearance and his manner of speaking, will be noted on several other occasions in the Telemachy: by ‘Mentor’/Athena (2.270–80), Nestor (3.122–5), Helen (4.141–6), Menelaus (4.149–50, 611), and Odysseus (16.300–10). This suggests that one of the functions of Telemachus’ trip is to underscore his identity as Odysseus’ son; cf. Introduction. Believing that he is Odysseus’ son in turn opens the way to adopting his father as a model;57

54 Todorov (1977: 61).
for sons who do or do not emulate their fathers, cf. 2.276–8; II. 4.370–400; 6.476–81.

214–20 Telemachus is not so much suggesting that Penelope is not telling him the truth, but rather is indicating that he only knows about his father Odysseus from hearsay (φησί, φασί), and does not know him from personal experience (οἴδα). For the opposition ‘hearsay’ versus ‘knowledge based on personal experience’, cf. 3.184–7; II. 2.485–6; and 4.374–5.

217–20 For the combination of hope and resignation, cf. 158–68n. By the end of the Odyssey the narratees know that, in fact, Telemachus is the son of a blessed man, who will grow old among his possessions (cf. 11.134–7) and is not the most unfortunate of all mortals (cf. Introduction).

224–9 Exploiting her assumed status as an ignorant outsider, Athena asks Telemachus what feast is going on in the palace. As a goddess, she already knows the answer (cf. 91–2), but her purpose is to make the boy go on talking about the Suitors; for the technique of suggestive questions, cf. 59–62n. She helps him along by herself criticizing the Suitors’ behaviour in strong language (they are ‘overbearing’). She even intensifies her own role as ‘outsider’ by conjuring up a hypothetical ‘prudent’ onlooker, who would be ‘scandalized’ by the ‘shameful things’ he saw; cf. II. 4.539–42 and 13.343–4.58

This early divine condemnation of the Suitors is also an important signal for the narratees. Throughout his narrative the narrator will do all he can to paint a negative picture of the Suitors: their own words and deeds discredit them; other characters, including Athena, speak or think about them in negative terms (e.g., 14.81–95; 17.360–4; 18.346–8 = 20.284–6); and even he himself openly deprecates them (cf. 4.772n.). There is a whole array of negative words to describe them and their behaviour: *ἀναιδ-, ‘shameless’, *ἀτασθαλ-, ‘reckless behaviour’, *ἀφραδ-, ‘foolish’ (2.282), *νηπιος, ‘fool’, *υβρ-, ‘overbearing’, *ὑπερβασίη, ‘transgression’, *ὑπέρβιος, ‘wanton’, *ὑπερηνορέων, *ὑπερμενέοντες, and *ὑπερφίλας, ‘overbearing’.59 For their ‘crimes’, cf. Introduction to 22. Thus, unlike the Iliad, the Odyssey has clear ‘baddies’.

This black picture of the Suitors is one of the strategies employed by the narrator to make his narratees accept the outcome of his story, Odysseus’ bloody revenge on the Suitors. Other strategies are the repeated *prolepses

of Odysseus’ revenge, some by authoritative persons; the support he receives from Athena (cf. 26–95n.) and Zeus (1.29–43; 2.146–56; 20.98–121; and 21.413–15); the selective moralism (cf. 32–43n.); the ‘plugging’ of Odysseus the just king (cf. 2.229–34n.); and the Apologue’s ‘key’ function (cf. Introduction to 9).

227 ὤβρι-, ‘(act) overbearing’, belongs to the character-language †: forty times direct speech; once embedded focalization (16.410), twice simple narrator-text (4.627; 17.169). Of the twenty-six instances in the Odyssey, twenty concern the Suitors. Hybris essentially means ‘the serious assault on the honour of another, which is likely to cause shame, and lead to anger and attempts at revenge.’

232–41 A double combination of hope and resignation (cf. 158–68n.): this must have been a prosperous house – but in fact (νῦν δὲ) its owner has disappeared – if only he had died on the battlefield – but in fact (νῦν δὲ) he has disappeared without a trace. Through his use of μέλλει + present tense infinitive Telemachus introduces a nostalgic touch, comparable to the *‘if ever he was’ motif: this once must have been a wealthy aἰκός, but that was so long ago and contrasts so sharply with the present situation that one almost wonders whether it ever was; cf. 18.138.

236–41 Like Eumaeus in 14.367–71, Telemachus would have preferred it if Odysseus had died in Troy (cf. 24.21–34n.) or at home, for then he would at least have had a grave mound, ensuring his and his son’s *κλεὸς.

245–51 Here Telemachus introduces the Suitors collectively; for individual introductions, cf. 367–424n.

The wasting of Odysseus’ aἰκός is described throughout the Odyssey not only with verbs meaning ‘to destroy’ (διαρραῖω, (κατα)κείρω, ἀλλυμι, τρῦχω, φθινύθω) but also ‘to eat’ (βιβρόσκω, (κατ)έδω, (κατ)έφαγον, and *δαρδάπτω); the Suitors are literally consuming his property; cf. 106–12n.

249–51 For the first time the subject of Penelope’s remarriage is brought up; it will recur time and again in the course of the story, in the mouths of various characters and at first sight in a bewildering way. The ancient Homeric critical principle of the lusis ek tou prosopou, i.e., ‘explaining (a crux) from (the point of view of) a character’, is highly relevant here. Penelope is consistent throughout: she hates her Suitors (17.499–500), the
manner of their courting (18.274–80; 19.133–5; 21.68–72), and the idea of remarrying (20.61–82), tries to win time through tricks (the web: 2.93–110n.), but feels the pressure exerted on her by her parents and Telemachus (19.158–61, 524–34). When Telemachus’ *coming of age forces her – much against her will – to surrender, she manages to trick the Suitors out of a collection of precious gifts (250–83) and organizes a bow-contest, which must at least bring her a new husband who is equal to Odysseus (19.570–81). As a child Telemachus was opposed to a remarriage (19.530–1), but at the opening of the story he is in favour of it (2.53–4), because he is loath to see his patrimony being dissipated due to the presence of the Suitors (1.250b–251). He fails to see through the delaying tactics of his mother and interprets her behaviour as indecision (1.249–50a = 16.126–7a). However, he does not want to force his mother to remarry (2.130–7; 20.343). When he discovers that Odysseus is still alive, the idea of Penelope marrying another man becomes hateful to him (16.33–5, 73–7). When he says to one of the Suitors in 20.341–2 that he is urging her to remarry he is lying, in order not to reveal the revenge scheme. Odysseus, during his years of absence, is of course concerned about whether Penelope is still faithful to him (11.178), but upon his return he welcomes her announcement that she is to remarry (19.583–7), because he knows this will never happen. The Ithacans, falsely led to believe that Penelope has remarried, criticize her act (23.149–51). Athena steers a relaxed *ad hoc* course, since she knows that she herself will prevent a remarriage. She suggests to Telemachus that it might not be a bad idea for Penelope to remarry, when the youth still favours this idea (1.275–80), but when she needs to speed the youth home, she alleges that Penelope is on the verge of remarrying and taking with her his possessions (15.16–23). The *Suitors* woo Penelope because of her beauty (18.212–13, 245–9). They feel entitled to woo her, because they think Odysseus is dead (20.333–7). They feel cheated by Penelope, who promises to remarry but postpones an actual remarriage, and therefore consider themselves justified in courting her in an abnormal manner, viz. through a ‘siege’ of the palace (2.87–128). At times, they consider the possibility of a normal courtship, i.e., by sending gifts from their own palaces to Penelope’s father (2.195–207; 16.390–2), but never actually do so. Occasionally, the remarriage is said to be a mere pretext, so that the Suitors can feast at someone else’s expense (21.68–72) or take over Odysseus’ position as ‘king’ (22.48–53). The first claim is a rhetorical *ad hoc* exaggeration; for the second, cf. 386–7n.
The present passage, ‘she does not refuse a hateful marriage nor accomplishes it’ (= 16.126–7), makes clear Telemachus’ initial position: he feels irritated by Penelope’s indecision, which only prolongs the devastating presence of the Suitors in the palace. The qualification of the marriage as ‘hateful’ represents Penelope’s focalization (cf. 18.272), not that of Telemachus. His misreading of Penelope’s delaying tactics is an indication of the strained relationship between mother and son; cf. 345–59n.  

251 Telemachus’ final words are an – unintentional – prolepsis †: in 4.625–847 the Suitors will indeed threaten his life.  

252 The unique speech-introduction with ἐπολακτήσασα, ‘in indignation’, shows us Athena warming to her role as shocked visitor.  

253–305 The structure of Athena’s speech is as follows: (wish) If only Odysseus would return and kill the Suitors. But that lies on the knees of the gods, whether he returns and takes his revenge. (exhortatory formula) I urge you to consider how to remove the Suitors from the palace. Come, listen to my advice: in an assembly ask them to go home and suggest that your mother go to her father and remarry (answer to 243–51). (exhortatory formula) But you yourself I will advise: go to Pylos and Sparta to inquire after Odysseus (answer to 243). If you find out that he is alive, wait another year. If you find that he is dead, give him a cenotaph (answer to 234–41), and remarry your mother (answer to 249–50). Next consider how to kill the Suitors. (example) Don’t you know how much kleos Orestes won after he killed the murderer of his father? You be valorous too, in order to gain kleos (answer to 240). (conclusion) But I will return to my ship. (exhortatory formula) Listen to my advice.’

We see that Athena makes more suggestions than are actually compatible with one another (if Telemachus remarries his mother, it is strictly speaking unnecessary to kill the Suitors); but her purpose here is to encourage Telemachus to take action, by showing him that there are possible solutions to all the problems he has raised. Her ‘let the gods be your witnesses’ (273) hints at the function of the assembly in Book 2: although it will, practically be a failure (the Suitors won’t give heed to Telemachus’ request to go home), it will still be important, in that it openly indicts the Suitors’ depravity.

64 Scholion ad loc.  
‘Mentes’/Athena carefully continues her role-playing: she recounts a visit by Odysseus to her father’s house (257–64), once more suppresses her *divine omniscience, saying that Odysseus’ fate lies ‘upon the knees of the gods’ (267–8; the narratees may note the ambiguity † of her words), and reverts to the fiction that a ship and companions are waiting for her (303–5).

253–69 Like Telemachus in 115–17, Athena daydreams about the return of Odysseus the avenger. The fact that this *prolepsis of Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors is voiced by Athena is important; the revenge is divinely sanctified. The form of her nostalgić wish (‘if only he would . . . being such as he was when . . . If such an Odysseus would . . . Then . . .’ resembles those of Nestor (II. 7.132–58; 11.670–761; and 23.629–43), Menelaus (4.341–6), Achilles (11.498–503), ‘the Cretan’/Odysseus (14.468–505), Eumaeus (17.313–15), and Laertes (24.376–82).

255–64 This anecdote about Odysseus is not known from other sources, but there is no reason to consider it Athena’s invention; Mentes had been introduced by the narrator as Odysseus’ xéinos (105) and Ephyra is a source of poison (cf. 2.328–9). In general, the rule of thumb in Homer is that stories are true as long as they are not labelled as untrue by the narrator.66

The form in which it is told is that of the epic regression †:

C I once saw Odysseus when he stayed with us (257–8),
B when he came back from Ephyra, from Ilus (259).
A He had gone there to ask for poison (260–2a),
B’ which Ilus did not give him (262b–263),
C’ but my father gave it (264).

It is the first in a series of ‘young Odysseus’ anecdotes (cf. 4.341–4; 19.393–466; 21.11–41; and 24.114–19), which, together with the Trojan anecdotes (4.240–64, 266–89; 8.75–82, 499–520), Odysseus’ travel stories (7.244–96, Books 9–12), and the prophecy concerning the hero’s life after his return (11.119–37), provide the narratees with a fairly complete biography.67

It also starts the image-building of Odysseus the archer, which prepares the narratees for his performance in Book 21, when he wins the bow-contest, and Book 22, when he kills a substantial number of Suitors with his


275–8 For Athena’s perspective on Penelope’s remarriage, cf. 249–51n.

289–96 Athena turns to the use of the infinitive pro imperative, which is common in long instructions; cf. 10.505–40n.

296–7 Athena’s remark that Telemachus is no longer a child, made by way of encouragement, will later prove to be of vital importance to the main story, too: his ‘starting to grow a beard’, i.e., coming of age, is the natural moment for him to become the new master of the oikos and hence for Penelope to remarry (cf. 18.269–70); for this reason, the fact will be reiterated many times: 2.313–14; 18.175–6, 217, 228–9; 19.19, 88, 160–1, 530–4; 20.309–10; and 22.426–7.

298–302 The *’Oresteia’ story is used by Athena as a hortatory paradigm for Telemachus, hence her focus on his counterpart Orestes. No mention is made of the matricide (which has no parallel in the Odyssey) and the murder of Aegisthus is presented as laudable, indeed as something which brings *kleos (this makes it attractive for Telemachus, who deplores his lack of kleos, cf. 94–5n., and adds to the acceptability of Odysseus’ killing of the Suitors).

301–2 For embedded narratives ending with an exhortation, cf. 7.297n.

308 Telemachus, thanking ‘Mentes’ for his advice, compares him to a father. He will use a *’parents and children’ comparison twice more: of Nestor (17.111–13) and, sarcastically, of Antinous (17.397).

309–18 This final exchange, which shows Telemachus offering a bath and guest-gift to his guest, and Athena courteously declining both, stresses once again *Telemachus’ impeccable hospitality, and allows the narratees to savour one last time the dramatic irony † of the situation; it would be unthinkable for a god to accept a gift (cf. Hermes in II. 24.433–6), let alone be bathed.

319–24 The meeting between a god and a mortal sometimes ends with an epiphany, the god moving away like a bird; cf. 3.371–3 and II. 13.62–5. The precise ontological status of these and other divine *bird’ scenes (cf. for the Od., 5.51–4, 337–53; and 22.239–40) is the subject of much debate: are we dealing with a comparison or with a metamorphosis? 69 In the present

---


passage ὁς suggests a comparison, the close similarity to 3.371–2 a metamorphosis, while διέπτατο, literally ‘she flew’ or metaphorically ‘she sped’ (cf. II. 15.83 and 172), is ambiguous. Perhaps the matter should not be pressed. What is described is an unnaturally quick disappearance: one moment ‘Mentes’ was there, the next moment he was gone (cf. 410). The function of these epiphanies is to encourage the mortal visited; he is given to understand that he has in fact been talking with a god. They are often accompanied by a physical stimulus (cf. II. 13.60–1); here Athena not only gives Telemachus ‘power and courage’ (cf. her announcement in 89), but also reminds him of his father ‘even more than before’, a reference to the beginning of their meeting, when she found him daydreaming about his father (114–17).

Telemachus’ reaction to Athena’s epiphany is typical: he is ‘amazed’ (θαμβησε; cf. 3.372–3; 16.178–9; 19.36; II. 3.398; 4.79). He concludes that ‘Mentes’ must have been a god (cf. 420, 444; 2.372), yet does not know which god (cf. 2.262: ‘the god of yesterday’); the ἐκατοτήν of 420 and ‘Athena’ of 444, are paralepses † of the narrator (cf. 118n.). Contrast Nestor, who in 3.375–9 will rightly infer the identity of the god.

324 Referring to Telemachus as ἵσθιος φῶς, ‘godlike man’ (cf. 20.124, again of Telemachus), the narrator signals that something in the youth has changed; it leads into the next scene, in which he will assert himself.

325–424 Though not instructed by ‘Mentes’/Athena to do so, Telemachus immediately seeks an outlet for his newly acquired energy and confronts Penelope (325–66) and the Suitors (367–424); their surprised reactions (360–1, 381–2) make clear that this is the first time he has asserted himself. His ‘maiden speech’ is focalized positively (‘sensible’) by Penelope, negatively (‘boldly’) by the Suitors.

325–7 Only now does the narrator reveal what since 155 Phemius has been singing about to the Suitors. He confines himself to a summary (‘the woeful return of the Greeks, which Athena inflicted upon them leaving Troy’), which takes the form of a proem: a noun, indicating the subject; verb of speaking; an adjective and relative clause which further define the subject (cf. 1–10n.). Although we are given no more details about the exact content of the song, we may surmise from 11–15 that it recounts the nostoi of all except Odysseus. Phemius has therefore chosen a subject which will please the listening Suitors, who for three years have been taking advantage of Odysseus’ lack of a nostos and do not expect him to return; cf. Demodocus
(8.266–366n.) and Odysseus (11.225–330n.) accommodating the tastes of—some of—their listeners. Its tantalizing brevity gives Phemius’ song the status of appetizer for the other ‘nostos’ stories to follow, told by Nestor (3.103–200), Menelaus (4.351–586), Odysseus (10.15–16n.), and by the narrator himself, the Odyssey (1.1–10n.). At the same time, the narratees may note the dramatic irony † of the Suitors enjoying this song, while that same goddess Athena, conversing with Telemachus, is setting in motion the chain of events which will lead to Odysseus’ return, and their own death. Another instance of a significant accompanying song is the hoax marriage song which accompanies the resumed marriage of Odysseus and Penelope (23.117–65n.).

Athena’s wrath against the Greeks because of Ajax’s attempt to rape Cassandra70 is an instance of the *‘divine anger’ theme. It is referred to again in 3.130–66; 4.499–511; and 5.108–11. All these references are extremely elliptical and in almost every one Athena’s (negative) role is overshadowed by that of other gods (Zeus and Poseidon). This underplaying is caused, of course, by the fact that in the Odyssey she is to play a positive and helpful role; cf. 6.323–31n.

328–66 This is the first in a series of ‘Penelope leaves her room’ scenes: cf. 16.409–51; 17.26–166; 18.158–303; 19.53–604; 21.1–358, and 23.1–296nn.71 These scenes contain the following elements: (i) indication of why Penelope leaves her room (328–9); she (ii) descends to the megaron, in the company of two servants (330–1); (iii) takes up a position near one of the central pillars, veiled and flanked by her servants (332–5) or sits down; (iv) speaks (336–44); (v) receives an answer (345–59); (vi) reacts (-); and (vii) retires to her room again (360–4).

Penelope’s almost permanent retirement to her upstairs room is an indication of the disorder of Odysseus’ oikos; cf. Laertes’ retirement to the country. In normal households the mistress of the house joins the men as they drink in the megaron after dinner (cf. Helen in 4.121ff., and Arete in 6.304–9; 7.139ff.), but as far as possible Penelope avoids contact with the Suitors (cf. 15.516–17).

Penelope’s body language also speaks volumes: Homeric women regularly wear veils when they leave the house72 and are attended by servants

when they need a helping hand (Helen in 4.120–35 and Arete in 6.307); the fact that Penelope wears a veil inside her own house and surrounds herself with ‘idle’ servants signals to the Suitors (and the narratees) her chastity, as she herself will explain in 18.182–4.

**Penelope** is the most enigmatic of Odyssean characters.\(^{73}\) The only piece of explicit narratorial characterization † is her stock epithet περίφρυν, ‘circumspect’. Conversely, there is much explicit actorial characterization, which yields a wide range of views: Telemachus considers her indecisive, a bad hostess, and heartless (345–59n.); the Suitors consider her wily (2.85–128n.); Agamemnon first considers her loyal but, since she is a woman, suspect on principle (11.409–56n.), and later, unconditionally loyal (24.191–202n.); Odysseus appreciates her wiliness (18.281–3) and caution (23.111–16), yet underestimates her capacity to keep a secret and hence excludes her from his revenge scheme (Introduction to 19). Since the narrator hardly ever enters her mind and her inner thoughts therefore remain a secret, the narratees have nothing to go on but her words and deeds. These show her to be loyal (her constant tears are not a sign of sentimentality but a manifestation of her loyalty; cf. especially her tears when she fetches Odysseus’ bow: 21.56); a loving mother (she faints when she hears about Telemachus’ departure: 4.703–6, and weeps when she sees him back again: 17.38–40); and crafty (she elicits gifts from the Suitors; cf. 18.250–83n., and outwits Odysseus at the moment of their reunion; cf. 23.1–240n.). For comparisons of Penelope with Helen and Clytemnestra, cf. 11.409–56n.

328–9 A typical Homeric device for bringing a character on stage is by making him/her see or hear what is going on on that ‘stage’;\(^{74}\) cf. 5.282–4, 333–5; 12.16–18; and 16.155–7nn.

330–1 An instance of the *‘not alone’* motif, which here signals Penelope’s chastity; cf. 328–66n.

336–44 The *effects of the epic storytelling are twofold: whereas the Suitors listen in silent enjoyment to Phemius’ song, Penelope reacts with a tearful speech. (A) She asks Phemius to sing another song, (B) because this ‘woeful’ song (about the return of the Greeks) distresses her, longing as she is for Odysseus (who has not yet returned).

343–4 Instead of mentioning Odysseus’ name, Penelope uses a

\(^{74}\) De Jong (1987a: 107).
periphrastic denomination †: ‘such a head . . . of my husband’ (343–4); her use of ‘head’ expresses affection (cf. *II.* 8.281; 18.114; 23.94) and esteem (cf. *II.* 18.82), but may also suggest that she thinks that Odysseus is dead (in 10.521, 536; 11.29, 49, 549, 557; *II.* 11.55; 18.114; 21.336; 22.348; 23.94; 24.276, 579 the head is that of a dead person). For her – wavering – views on Odysseus’ state, cf. 4.724–6n.

Penelope’s longing for Odysseus differs from that of Telemachus (in 115–17): she misses what she once had and has now lost (ποθεω), whereas Telemachus wishes for the return of a person he has never seen; cf. the πόθος of Laertes (11.196), Anticlea (11.202), and Eumaeus (14.144). Her longing is therefore an instance of the *‘forgetting/remembering’* motif.

For Odysseus’ *kleos*, cf. 9.19–20n.

345–59 Instead of Phemius, it is Telemachus who reacts to Penelope’s speech. This in itself is the first sign of his new assertiveness, which is further demonstrated by what he says. He answers the two points she raises in parallel order †, (A’) defending Phemius’ choice of subject, and (B’) consoling her, and then sends her back to her rooms. *Ad A’*: he defends Phemius, by correcting Penelope’s equation of a ‘woeful’ return and a ‘woeful’ song (it is Zeus who causes the sorrows and is to blame, not the singer, who merely sings about them), and by pointing out that the singer is merely doing what his audience expects him to do (to come up with the ‘newest’ song). Having just been informed by a god that Odysseus’ return is imminent, Telemachus can listen to the song with dry eyes.75 *Ad B’*: he consoles Penelope with the Homeric cliché that Odysseus is not the only one to die; cf. 19.265–7; *II.* 5.382–404; 15.139–41; and 21.106–13.76

All in all, Telemachus’ reaction reflects little understanding for Penelope’s tears. In general, the relationship between son and mother is strained: he feels vexed by what he sees as indecision towards the Suitors (249–50 = 16.126–7); does not force her to remarry mainly because he fears the reaction of others (2.130–7); does not confide in her about his trip (2.373–6); reckons with the possibility that she has remarried in his absence (16.33–5); gives a disparaging assessment of her qualities as a hostess (20.131–3); and considers her heartless in the reunion with his father (23.96–103). This tension is of course due largely to their divergent interests (Penelope wants to hold out as long as possible, but for Telemachus this

---

means a decline in his patrimony, as Antinous will not fail to point out in 2.125–6, but it also flows forth from *Penelope’s enigmatic character (which Odysseus most of the time understands, but which is neither understood nor liked by Telemachus).

351–2 Telemachus’ statement that the audience always like best the ‘newest song’ also has *metanarrative relevance: it is an indirect advertisement for the Odyssey itself, which will offer an even newer ‘nostos’ story than that of Phemius; cf. 1–21n.

353–5 Sometimes Telemachus says that Odysseus is dead (here, 413; 2.46–7; 3.86–95, 241–2; 15.268), sometimes that he may be alive (2.131–2, 214–23; 20.340);77 for this fluctuation, cf. 158–68n. Here (and in 413) his statement that his father is dead forms part of his dissimulation: the Suitors are not to know what he has heard from the stranger; cf. 413–21n.

356–9 Telemachus appropriates adult, male authoritative language; cf. Alcinous in 11.352–3 and Hector in Il. 6.490–3. He claims that ‘serious talk’ (μῦθος), such as will follow from 367 onwards (ἐρχέται μῦθον), is the concern of men.

362–4 We take our leave of Penelope while she is asleep; she will re-enter the story in 4.675. She spends a great deal of time sleeping in the Odyssey, even during the climax of the story, the slaughter of the Suitors; cf. 5.491–3n.

365–6 In typically Homeric fashion, Penelope’s beauty is nowhere described, but rather indirectly evoked through the reaction of others; cf. 9.233–57n. The Suitors’ erotic desire for Penelope will be explicitly recorded again in 18.212–13. It indicates that they are wooing her primarily because of her beauty; cf. 249–51n.

367–424 Telemachus’ first open confrontation with the Suitors. This scene is an anticipatory doublet † of the assembly scene of Book 2: the issues are introduced, the tone is set, and the positions taken up. Although they are surprised by Telemachus’ harsh words, the Suitors do not take him seriously enough to interrupt their merrymaking (421–2). This is typical of the relationship between Telemachus and the Suitors in the early phase of the story; cf. 2.242–56 and 298–336nn. Of the 108 Suitors78 (cf. 16.247–53), sixteen are mentioned by name. Of these sixteen, seven are attributed speaking roles (Antinous: twenty-three times, Eurymachus thirteen times, Amphinomus five times, Agelaus

thrice, Leodes twice, Leocritus, Amphimedon, and Ctesippus once each); the other Suitors are collectively given a voice in actual *tis*-speeches (cf. 2.323–37n.). Some Suitors are explicitly introduced by the narrator (*Amphinomus, Ctesippus, and *Leodes), others mainly characterize themselves through their words and deeds (*Antinous, *Eurymachus, *Agelaus, and *Leocritus), the remaining ones are no more than names, cannon-fodder in the massacre of Book 22, who are not even honoured with ‘obituaries’, as are their Iliadic counterparts.

The ringleaders are Antinous and Eurymachus, who surpass all others in ‘manly valour’ and are ‘godlike’ (4.628–9 = 21.186–7). Antinous is openly hostile in his speeches, aggressive in his behaviour (he comes up with the idea of ambushing Telemachus: 4.663–72; when the ambush fails, he suggests killing the youth: 16.371–86; and he throws a footstool at Odysseus: 17.462–5). He surpasses all the other Suitors in depravity, in that he is the only one not to give food to ‘the beggar’/Odysseus (17.411–52); Penelope hates him most of all the Suitors (17.499–500). Eurymachus is more shrewd: he usually speaks after Antinous and often acts as a sinister peacemaker (400–11; 16.435–47). Thus he is smart enough to win the esteem of the Ithacans, and is touted as the one most likely to marry Penelope (15.17–18, 519–22). Occasionally the roles are reversed and it is Antinous who is hypocritical (2.303–8) and Eurymachus who is aggressive (2.178–207). In view of their prominence, it is only fitting that they should be the first to be killed by Odysseus’ arrows (22.8–88).

The structure of the conversation, which combines the reverse form † and the parallel form †, is as follows:

Telemachus (declares war on the Suitors)

A Suitors of my mother, who have an excess of *hybris*,
(he echoes ‘Mentes’/Athena’s deprecation of 227; ‘excessively hybristic’)
Let us now be quiet and listen to the singer.
(a reaction to the intervention of Penelope, which caused the singer to stop singing and the Suitors to start shouting)
But tomorrow I will call an assembly and ask you to leave the palace or,
if you want to go on devouring Odysseus’ goods, ask the gods to punish you (368–80).

Antinous (does not go into any of the points raised by Telemachus, but only reacts with irony † to the fact that he has opened his mouth)
378–80 A *prolepsis of Odysseus’ revenge, which takes the form of a prayer. The repetition of νήποινον ἀλέσθαι, ‘spoiling without punishment’ (377), in νήποινοι . . . δολοσθε, ‘may you perish with no payment given’ (380) suggests that the punishment must mirror the crime. In fact, the reaction of the Suitors’ relatives will become a major issue at the end of the story; cf. 24.412–548n.

381–2 The focalization of the Suitors triggers character-language †: θαρσάλεως, ‘boldly’ (thrice embedded focalization †: here, 18.411; and 20.269, and thrice direct speech).

386–7 It is no coincidence that it is Antinous who introduces the issue of who will succeed Odysseus as king of Ithaca;79 in 22.49–53 Eurymachus will say that Antinous was never as interested in Penelope as he was in Odysseus’ position. This may be an exaggeration, an attempt to deflect all guilt onto

---

one man, but when we add to this Antinous’ suggestion that they kill Telemachus and divide his possessions, one gets the impression that this most depraved of all Suitors does have other reasons for wooing Penelope besides her beauty; he wants Odysseus’ goods and position. Marriage to Penelope does not automatically mean the throne. The position of main king, i.e., the primus inter pares among a number of kings, which a person has by virtue of his possessions and prestige, is in principle hereditary, but the successor has to claim his position. If the main king dies before his successor has established himself, a struggle for power can result. This is the situation at the opening of the Odyssey. The abnormal manner in which the Suitors pursue their courtship, staying in Odysseus’ palace and devouring his goods, weakens Telemachus’ position as potential successor.

396 Telemachus’ assumption that Odysseus is dead here forms part of his argument; the question of kingship and the mastery of the house is only relevant if Odysseus is dead. For his wavering opinion, cf. 353–5n.

400–11 *Eurymachus’ characteristic diplomacy and friendliness is purely opportunistic; he wants to cajole Telemachus into sharing his knowledge with them. For the Suitors, too, it is vital to know whether there is news of Odysseus.

It now turns out that the Suitors had observed the arrival and speedy departure of the guest. Their perceptions have not been recorded by the narrator (in the form of embedded focalization †), which allows this important information to be revealed in Eurymachus’ speech. This device of the emancipation of speech versus narrator-text is an innovation of the Odyssey; in the Iliad the content of a speech is usually carefully prepared for by the narrator. Other instances: 4.649–56; 16.465–75; 17.270; 18.11–12, 250–83; 19.570–81; 20.204; 21.102–17; 22.99–202, 248–54; 23.190–201; 24.386–411, and 439–49nn.

413–21 Telemachus’ claim that Odysseus is dead (cf. 353–5n.), his distrust of messages (cf. 166–8n.), and the repetition of the false information which ‘Mentes’ gave about himself (418–19 ≈ 180–1) are all rhetorical, as the narrator explicitly notes in the *speech evaluation at 420. The narratees are given an early proof that he has inherited his father’s capacity for secrecy. His dissimulation forms part of his sustained strategy to keep ‘the stranger’ (and his information) for himself; cf. 130–5n. For the paralepsis † ‘immortal goddess’ in 420, cf. 319–24n.

421–2 The main action being over, the remainder of the day is quickly dispensed with in the form of a summary †.
423 In the *Odyssey* almost every *sunset* is recorded (as is each sunrise: 2.1n.). This is one manifestation of the Homeric tendency towards singulative narration, i.e., when each occurrence of an event in the fabula † is also narrated in the story †;80 cf. the faithful reports – in the form of type-scenes † – of daily routines such as meals, dressing, etc., which together ‘create the illusion of continuous, and therefore, real life’.81 The repeated sunsets and/or sunrises seem to have been employed, first by the singers and then by the (Alexandrian) book-dividers, to create natural pauses in the story.82

The *Odyssey* has seven different ways to describe a sunset (1.423 = 18.306; 2.388 = 3.497 = 11.12 = 15.185 = 296 = 471; 3.329 = 5.225 = 9.168 = 558 = 10.185 = 478 = 12.31 = 19.426; 6.321a = 8.417a; 13.35; 14.457; and 16.452–3), which suggests that there is some element of contextual choice; see notes *ad locc*. Here the ‘dark night’ prepares for the torches of the ensuing scene.

424–44 An instance of the *‘retiring for the night’ type-scene*: first the others retire (Suitors: 424), then the central figure of the preceding scene (Telemachus: 425–44). Here the second element is expanded; the narrator describes in detail how Telemachus is put to bed by his old nurse Euryclea. Outwardly nothing has changed in Telemachus’ situation; he is still seen as a child by those around him. Inwardly his unstructured daydreaming about the return of his father has been replaced by a more specific pondering over his trip (cf. 427 and 444).

428–35 A chunk of explicit narratorial characterization † of Euryclea,83 which is marked off by ring-composition † (τῷ...δαιμόνιας δαιδός φέρε = οί δαιμόνιας δαιδός φέρε). The narrator focuses on her position of honour (she is given a genealogy, Laertes paid much for her and honoured her as much as his wife), her lifelong devotion to Laertes’ family (he bought her when she was still very young), and her love for Telemachus. This is relevant to her role in the early books, when she helps Telemachus prepare for his voyage (2.337–81), and consoles Penelope when she finds out about her son’s trip (4.719–58). After a second chunk of explicit characterization (by Penelope in 19.353–8), which concentrates on Euryclea’s relation to Odysseus, she will recognize her master (19.317–507) and assist him during the slaughter of the Suitors (Books 21–2).

Euryclea is the dominant part of a character doublet †, her *alter ego* being

---

*Eurynome. Having nursed both Odysseus and Telemachus, her actions are always connected with these two, while Eurynome is more closely connected with Penelope. She belongs to a group of (old) ‘good’ servants (cf. *Eu-maeus, *Phi-loetius, *Dolius and his wife), which contrasts with a group of (young) ‘bad’ ones (*Melantho and *Melanthius).

443–4 An instance of the *'sleeplessness’ motif. Though he had not yet mentioned the trip to the Suitors, as he had the assembly of the next day (372–5), these lines make it clear that Telemachus has not forgotten this part of Athena’s instructions. For Telemachus thinking of the trip which *Athena (paralepsis †) had shown him, cf. 319–24n.
BOOK TWO

Book 2 covers the second day (cf. Appendix A), which brings the Ithacan assembly announced the previous day by Telemachus (1–259; cf. 1.373–5), the preparations for Telemachus’ trip (‘Mentor’/Athena promises to help him with a ship: 260–97; the Suitors ridicule his plan to go and hope that he will fare ill: 298–336; Euryclea, helping him with provisions, shows motherly concern: 337–81), and his secret departure (382–434).

1–5 According to the principle of ‘reverse order’ †, Telemachus, who was the last to go to bed, is the first to rise.

1 The beginning of a new day is almost without exception marked in the Odyssey, as is the end (1.423n.). The narrator has nine different ways to describe a sunrise:1 2.1 = 3.404 = 491 = 4.306 = 5.228 = 8.1 = 13.18 = 15.189 = 17.1; 3.1–3; 5.1–2; 5.390; 6.48–9; 13.93–5; 15.56 = 20.91; 15.495; 23.344–8; and cf. 5.263, 279, where we find no sunrise but a number, ‘on the fifth/eigh- teenth day’. The present version is the most common one, which is also used by characters in their embedded stories: 4.431, 576; 9.152, 170, 307, 437, 560; 10.187; 12.8, and 316.

2 The narrator refers to Telemachus by means of a periphrastic denomi- nation †: ‘dear son of Odysseus’. It occurs fourteen times in the Odyssey, but this (and cf. 35) is the first instance; it prepares for the ‘assembly’ scene, in which Telemachus will first publicly present himself as Odysseus’ son.

3–4 An instance of the ‘dressing’ type-scene, which occurs at daybreak or before a departure: 1.96–101; 4.308–9; 5.44–8, 229 + 230–2; 10.542 + 543–5; 14.528–31; 15.60–2, 550–1; 16.154–5; 17.2–4; and 20.125–7.2 Male

---

2 Arend (1933: 97–8) and Bowra (1952: 188–91).
characters put on clothing (not specified, except for 5.229 and 15.60–1), sandals, and a sword, and when they go out they take some form of stick (a spear: Telemachus; a javelin: Eumaeus; his magic wand: Hermes; a walking stick: ‘the beggar’/Odysseus). Female characters put on a mantle, girdle, and head-dress; for Athena’s exceptional dressing, cf. 1.96–101n.

6–259 This is the first instance of the ‘assembly’ type-scene; cf. 3.137–52; 8.1–47; and 24.420–66nn.3 The elements are: (i) the people are summoned (6–14); (ii) the convener of the assembly proclaims his intentions (15–81a; here Telemachus speaks only after a favourable prelude by another speaker); (iii) the people react (81b–83); (iv) other speakers react to the proposal (84–256; here expanded with an ‘omen’ scene); and (v) the assembly is dismissed (257–9).

The structure of the exchange is largely irregular, which conveys the heated atmosphere:

Aegyptius  A Who convened this assembly (25–9)
B and why (30–4)?

Telemachus  A’ I did (40–1),
B’ for private reasons (42–5):
C my father Odysseus is dead (46–9)
D and suitors of my mother are coming to my palace every day, sacrificing our cattle and drinking our wine, without me being able to stop them (50–69).
(from 64 onwards he no longer addresses Aegyptius only, but all the Ithacans)
E I beg you: leave me alone (70–9).
(instead of one of the Ithacans, a Suitor answers:)

Antinous  D’ Your mother Penelope is to blame for this (85–112).
F The answer of the Suitors is: send her home to be given in marriage by her father (113–26).
E’ We will not leave the palace until she has remarried (127–8).

Telemachus  F’ I will never send my mother away against her will (130–7).
E” Leave or, if you think this better, go on consuming (138–43a),
G but I will invoke the gods (143b–145).

Three times Telemachus speaks, carrying out the instructions he received from Athena: he asks the Suitors to go home (first indirectly: 70–9, then directly: 138–40; cf. 1.274); he touches upon the question of Penelope’s remarriage (50–4; cf. 1.275–8); and asks for a ship (212–23; cf. 1.279–83).

Three times Ithacans speak, all in favour of his cause. But three times a Suitor has the last word, each time speaking instead of the person addressed by the previous speaker, and the Suitors are apparently the victors of the meeting: they emphatically refuse to leave the palace, do not help Telemachus with a ship, and with their aggressive language intimidate the Ithacans who, despite a promising start (the elders make way for Telemachus: 14; the opening speech by Aegyptius is a good omen: 35; and Telemachus’ first speech mobilizes their pity: 81) and a direct appeal by Mentor (229–41), persevere in their passivity. Nevertheless, the assembly serves the function Athena had assigned to it in 1.273, viz. to indict the Suitors before the gods (cf. Telemachus’ conclusion in 211), and Telemachus, though ostensibly coming off worst, is its moral victor. The scene will be mirrored at the end of the Odyssey; cf. 24.420–66n.

Several speakers, for various reasons, employ the device of the indirect dialogue †, i.e., they speak about a person without addressing him; cf. Telemachus in 39–81, Mentor in 229–41, and Leocritus in 242–56nn.

6–14 The typical element of summoning the people (6–8 ≈ Il. 2.50–2;
9 ≈ II. 1.57 = 24.790 = Od. 8.24 = 24.421) is elaborated, so as to add weight to Telemachus’ first public performance: his going to the meeting-place is mentioned separately (10–11), his appearance is enhanced by Athena (12–13; a *‘beautification’ scene), and he sits down ‘on the seat of his father’ (14; a significant *seating arrangement). Initially, things go well, with the elders deferentially making way for him.

11 An instance of the ‘not alone’ motif, which we find in connection both with women (1.331; 6.84; 18.207; 19.601) and men (here, 15.100; II. 24.573). The human attendants have a practical (helping hand) or symbolic (sign of status or chastity) function; Telemachus’ dogs, who also accompany him in 17.62 and 20.145, are no more than companions. In the Odyssey we find for the first time the idea of dogs as friends of men (notably Argus in 17.291–327).4

15–37 Exceptionally, the first speaker of the assembly is not its convener Telemachus; cf. II. 20.13ff.5 This departure is effective in that Aegyptius’ speech (i) brings home the exceptional nature of this assembly, the first one held since Odysseus left for Troy (26–7) and Telemachus’ (first) public performance, which is clearly not foreseen by him (28), and (ii) adds an ominous and ironical touch to Telemachus’ ensuing speech.

Aegyptius, who appears only here in the Odyssey, is introduced in a chunk of explicit narratorial characterization †, which is marked off by ring-composition † (νρξ’ ἄγορεευειν: 15 ≈ ἄγορήσαστο: 24). The introduction is tailored to the context: one of his sons, Antiphus, accompanies Odysseus on the expedition to Troy, and though he has three other sons, including Eurynomus, who is one of the Suitors (cf. 22.242), he cannot forget him. The fact that he is Antiphus’ father explains why he speaks first: he hopes that there is news of the army.

In an external analepsis † the narrator informs the narratees of Antiphus’ death (17–20), which will also be recounted (anonymously) by Odysseus in the course of the ‘Cyclops’ episode (9.106–566, especially 288–90, 311–12, 344), and which is as yet unknown to Aegyptius, who still hopes for his son’s return. Its primary function is to shed a tragic light on the father’s hope that there will be news of the army; cf. the pathetic ‘he ate him as last’, which suggests that Antiphus had almost escaped death (after this, Odysseus puts an end to Polyphemus’ cannibalism and thereby avoids being eaten ‘last’

himself; cf. 9.369). Its secondary function is to authenticate Odysseus’ Apologue; cf. Introduction to 9.

Telemachus interprets Aegyptius’ concluding words (33–4), which recommend the as yet unknown convener of the assembly and pray for the fulfilment of his as yet unknown proposal, as a favourable omen, and this makes him eager to speak. For chance speech taken as portentous (φήμη or κληδόν), cf. 18.117 and 20.105–21nn. The narratees, who know what Telemachus will say, may note the dramatic irony † of the father of a Suitor praying that Zeus will fulfil the youth’s proposal to send the Suitors away from the palace.

37–8 Homeric public speakers generally hold a staff in their hands as symbol of their authority to speak (cf., e.g., Il. 2.279; 3.218; 10.328); only twice, however, is the detail of a herald handing over the staff to a prospective speaker recorded (here and Il. 23.567–8). The explicit mention adds to the solemnity of the moment, when Telemachus makes his public ‘maiden-speech’, and looks forwards to his gesture of throwing the sceptre on the ground in 80.

39–81 Telemachus’ strategy in his first speech is to drive a wedge between Ithacans and Suitors: talking about the Suitors to the Ithacans, instead of addressing them (indirect dialogue †), he tries to engage the Ithacans on his side, and make clear that the situation in his palace is their concern as well; this point will be continued by Halitherses in 166–8 and Mentor in 239–41.6

In his speech Telemachus alternatingly appeals to four emotions: (the Ithacans’) pity for himself, indignation at the Suitors’ behaviour, loyalty to Odysseus the good king, and their own responsibility: ‘a double misfortune has hit me: not only have I lost my father (pity), who has been like a father to you (loyalty), but now there is an even bigger disaster, which will soon ruin my entire oikos (pity). Suitors are wooing my mother against her will (indignation), sons of Ithacan nobles (responsibility). Instead of wooing her via her father Icarius, they come to my house and idly devour my household. There is no man like Odysseus to ward off this curse, and I am too weak (pity). (If I could, I would.) The situation is unbearable (pity) and my house is ruined beyond all decency (indignation). You must be scandalized (indignation), heed your reputation with the neighbours, and fear the wrath of the gods

6 Krehmer (1976).
(responsibility). (From this point onwards Telemachus, in excited exaggeration, starts ascribing an active role to the Ithacans.) Stop, friends, and leave me alone with my sorrow (pity and responsibility), unless Odysseus did you wrong, for which you now want to punish me by encouraging the Suitors (ironic reversal of loyalty). If it were you who destroyed my household, things would be less bad, since I could exact goods in requital, but now (allowing this mass of Suitors to besiege my palace) you are confronting me with sorrows against which nothing can be done (pity and responsibility)."

42–9 The device of the ‘erroneous questions’:7 Telemachus repeats in negative form Aegyptius’ suggestions (30–2), before he reveals, all the more emphatically, what is actually the case; cf. 11.198–203, 406–11; 16.114–21nn; Il. 1.93; 6.383–5; 16.50–1.

46 Telemachus’ claim that Odysseus is dead here serves a rhetorical (pathetic) function; cf. 1.353–5n.

47 ‘Parents and children’ comparisons/similes are frequent in the Odyssey: 1.308; 2.47b = 234b = 15.12b; 4.335–40; 5.394–9; 10.410–5 (calves: cows); 15.152; 16.17–21, 216–19 (birds); 17.111–13, 397; 19.518–29; 20.13–16 (bitch: puppies), 66–82.8 The repeated imagery may have a characterizing function (in the case of Telemachus: cf. 1.308n.) or a thematic function (when used in connection with Odysseus as ‘father’, it stresses the theme of ‘the man’ Odysseus and his social relations; cf. 1.1n.).

50–4 For rhetorical purposes Telemachus here presents a different view on *Penelope’s remarriage than in the private context of his conversation with ‘the stranger’: there he complained that his mother cannot make up her mind (1.249–50), here he presents her as being ‘beset’ (the verb ἐπιξράω is used in Il. 16.352, 356 of wolves attacking lambs and warriors attacking each other) by the Suitors ‘against her will’. At the same time, he hints at what he himself wants: Penelope should return to her father and be married off by him.

81–4 Through the *(all) the others . . . but X (alone) . . .* motif, the narrator focuses negatively on Antinous as the only one who ‘dares to answer Telemachus with harsh words’.

85–128 Antinous’ strategy consists of trying to drive a wedge between mother and son, i.e., exploit their strained relationship (cf. 1.345–59n.): ‘For you the Suitors are not to blame but your own mother and her tricks . . . the

8 Moulton (1977: 141–5).
Suitors will eat your substance, as long as she perseveres . . . it may bring her fame, but for you much loss of substance.’ Thus he incriminates Penelope: for three years now, she has led the Suitors on, meanwhile winning time through tricks, notably that of the web (93–110n.); she got her wiliness from Athena (116–18n.), and it surpasses that of Tyro (cf. 11.235–45), Alcmene (cf. 11.266–8), and Mycena (118–22, a priamel. These women have no specific reputation for being wily, but in the Homeric epics heroes and heroines from the past are generally considered superior to those of the present; cf. 8.221–3n.). Antinous’ speech is an important chunk of actorial explicit characterization †: for the first time the narratees are informed about the wily side of *Penelope’s character.

93–110 The story of Penelope’s web is told twice more in the Odyssey: by Penelope to ‘the beggar’/Odysseus in 19.138–56 and by the ghost of the Suitor Amphimedon to the ghost of Agamemnon in 24.128–50.9 The central part of the story, which tells about the weaving and night-time unravelling, is identical in all three versions (2.94–107 = 19.139–52 = 24.129–42), but the beginnings and ends display variations which reflect the focalization of the speaker. (i) The Suitors ascribe the idea of the trick to Penelope (2.93 = 24.128), Penelope herself (also) to a god (19.138). (ii) The Suitors describe the person who betrays Penelope’s secret as ‘one of the servants, who knew the whole story’ (2.108 = 24.144), whereas an infuriated Penelope speaks of ‘careless bitches’ (19.154). (iii) The Suitors ‘find’ Penelope unravelling the web (2.109 = 24.145), whereas Penelope saw how they ‘came towards’ her and ‘took hold’ of her (19.155). (iv) All three speakers end with the fact that Penelope had to finish the web against her will (2.110 = 19.156 = 24.146), but Antinous leaves open when exactly this was done, Penelope suggests that it was recently (19.157–61), and Amphimedon alleges that it was at the moment of Odysseus’ return (24.147–50).

The fact that Penelope’s trick takes the form of weaving10 is significant in two ways: (i) the verb ὑφεύγω in Homer has a metaphorical meaning of scheming and plotting (cf. 4.739; 5.356; 13.303, 386; 9.422; and Il. 3.212; 7.324 = 9.93; 6.187); (ii) in the Homeric epics weaving symbolizes the subordinate position of women (cf. 1.356–9; 21.350–3; and Il. 6.490–3, where women are ordered to return to their loom and not interfere with the business of

men); in this case, however, Penelope manages to turn the loom into an effective weapon against men.

96–102 Penelope’s deceptive speech to the Suitors is quoted directly, an instance of the ‘speech within a speech’ device: cf. 4.351–586 (passim); 6.276–84; Books 9–12 (passim); 14.468–503 (passim); 15.403–84 (passim); 17.124–46; 18.259–70; 19.141–7; 24.54–6, and 131–7. Except for 6.276–84, all instances form part of embedded narratives. Their inclusion may be the result of a leisured and full manner of narration (e.g., Menelaus in Book 4 or Eumaeus in Book 15), but often they fulfil a specific rhetorical function: to (i) increase the persuasiveness of the embedded narrative (it is as if we actually hear the person talking), or (ii) highlight a decisive point (here).

116–18 An – angry – instance of the ‘gift of the gods’ motif: when a person is said to have received a skill or instrument from the gods, or to have been ‘instructed’ or ‘loved’ by the gods, this means that that person is extraordinarily good at something; cf. 6.233–4; 8.63–4, 480–1, 488; II. 1.72.12

125–6 Antinous foresees *kleos for Penelope on account of her wiliness. Later, the ‘beggar’/Odysseus proclaims her kleos as just queen (19.108) and the ghost of Agamemnon her kleos as loyal wife (24.196–8). Penelope herself maintains that her kleos as a beautiful woman would be bigger if Odysseus returned home and took care of her again (18.255 = 19.128).

130–7 Forced by Antinous’ proposal (‘send your mother back to her father’: 113–14), Telemachus takes a moderate position on *Penelope’s remarriage: although he does not oppose the idea itself (cf. 51–4), he refuses to send her back against her will. His motivation is emotional (Penelope is after all his mother; note the emphatic anaphora ἵμμ...), practical (how can he pay back her dowry to her father), and social (he fears sanctions from Penelope’s father, avenging gods called down on him by his mother, and reproaches from the people).

138–45 Telemachus repeats more or less verbatim his words in 1.374–80. They gain new force, however, by what goes before (‘if you are so vexed by those things, i.e., Penelope’s behaviour which leads to the waste of my goods...’; cf. Antinous’ feigned concern in 125–6) and what follows (this time his announcement to call in the help of the gods triggers a divine reaction).

143–207 Throughout the Odyssey there are many prolepses of Odysseus’ return (often, as here, in conjunction with *prolepses of Odysseus’ revenge).

They can take the form of (i) announcements by the narrator to the narratees (e.g., 1.16–19) or by the gods to other gods (e.g., 1.82–3 or 5.41–2), information which reaches the narratees, not the mortal characters; (ii) religious signs or utterances, such as omens (see below), portentous dreams (19.535–69; 20.83–90), and prophecies (1.200–5; 2.170–6; 17.152–61); and (iii) secular utterances, such as wishes and prayers (1.115–17, 253–69; 2.342–3, 351–2; 14.171–3; 15.156–9, 180–1; 17.243, 539–40), announcements (passim in Books 14 and 19; 18.145–6), oaths (14.150–64; 19.303–7; 20.230–4), a hypothesis (18.384–6), and even a wager (14.393–400). The prolepses of (ii) and (iii) require interpretation and/or acceptance by the mortal characters; for the narratees, who already know from (i) – and presumably from their prior knowledge – that Odysseus will return, the interest lies in the interplay of announcement and reaction. The special form of Odysseus’ return home (in disguise) means that prolepses continue even after he has returned to his palace. The present scene combines an omen (now) and a prophecy (from the past).

There are eleven ‘omen’ scenes in the Homeric epics (most of which concern birds): here; 15.160–81, 525–38; 19.535–69; 20.103–21 (thunder), 242–7; Il. 2.299–332 (snake); 8.242–52; 12.200–50; 13.817–32; 24.306–21. There are also brief mentions of an omen, such as sneezing (17.541–7), thundering by Zeus (21.413–15), and chance speech taken as portentous (15–37n.).13 The elements of an ‘omen’ scene are: (i) the portent (146–54); (ii) the onlookers’ perception of and reaction to the portent (155–6; here confirmed by the narrator, cf. 156n.); (iii) an exegesis by one of the onlookers (157–76); which (iv) is accepted or, as here, rejected (177–207). An omen may appear spontaneously (19.535ff.; 20.242ff.; Il. 2.299ff. and 12.200ff.) or be cued (2.143–5; 15.156–9, 534–4; Il. 8.242–4; 13.817–20; 24.306–13). The function of an omen is to communicate divine support or a warning. In the present scene we find a combination of both functions: Zeus signals his support to Telemachus (who had asked him for revenge) and issues a warning to the Suitors (who must desist before Odysseus comes back). Thrice in Homer the exegesis of an omen is rejected: by Eurymachus here, by Penelope in 19.560–9 (a sign of her deep pessimism), and by Hector in Il. 12.230–50 (marking his temporary over-confidence as a result of Zeus’s support). The present omen is the first of a series of warnings, both divine

and secular, which the Suitors brush aside; cf. 17.414–61; 20.345–86; and 21.152–74nn. (in 18.119–57n. we find the variant of a Suitor being impressed by the warning, but prevented by fate from heeding it). These rejections mark their behaviour as reckless (ἀτασσομαλ-); cf. 1.32–43n. For the narratees, too, the omen is highly important, in that they see that *Odysseus’ bloody revenge on the Suitors is sanctified by the highest god; cf. 1.224–9n.

The four positive ‘bird’ omens in the *Odyssey* (i.e., birds appearing on the right) display a progression, which corresponds to the progression of the story: in the first omen (here) the eagles have no victim yet, they merely forebode death; in the second omen (15.160–81) the eagle has a prey, a goose; in the third omen (15.525–38) the falcon is tearing out the feathers of his victim, a dove, a sure sign that he will soon kill her; in the fourth passage (19.535–69), the eagle kills his victims, twenty geese. In all four cases the predator is explicitly linked to Odysseus (and/or Telemachus) in the ensuing exegeses. The ‘bird’ imagery of the omens is continued in a series of comparisons/similes: 14 16.216–19 (Odysseus and Telemachus at the moment of their reunion compared to sea-eagles and vultures); 22.302–8 (Odysseus and Telemachus, while murdering the Suitors, compared to vultures); 22.468–72 (the unfaithful female servants, when hanged, compared to thrushes and doves); and 24.538 (Odysseus, when attacking the families of the Suitors, compared to an eagle).

This portent uniquely features two eagles, a number which must refer to Odysseus and Telemachus as future avengers (though Halitherses in his exegesis refers only to Odysseus). Whereas the narrator normally confines himself to describing the portent (leaving the exegesis to one of the characters), here he turns to interpretation himself: the eagles ‘boded destruction’ (152, cf. *Il*. 1.105; 24.172). Or are we dealing here with the focalization of the Ithacans (cf. 155), who in 156 appear to have correctly understood the negative message of the omen? The birds ‘rending their cheeks and necks’, a human gesture of mourning, is an example of ‘imagery interaction’: the human world of the narrative context intrudes into the animal world of the omen or simile, or vice versa.15

156 Allowing himself one of his rare *narratorial interventions, the narrator informs the narratees (even before Halitherses’ exegesis) that the

---

Ithacans were ‘considering exactly the things which were bound to be fulfilled’; contrast Il. 2.36 (Agamemnon ‘was considering things which were not to be fulfilled’).

For proleptic μέλλω, which pathetically or menacingly announces what is fated to happen,\(^{16}\) cf. 3.146; 6.165; 7.270–1; 8.510; 9.230; 10.26–7; 17.364; 20.393–4; 21.98, 418; and 24.470–1.

157–60 The narrator inserts a chunk of explicit characterization † on Halitherses, which is tailored to the context: his being an expert (bird) soothsayer gives his ensuing interpretation maximum authority. His speech is further plugged through the speech-introduction ‘he in good sense spoke’, which always introduces speeches which the narrator approves of; cf. 228 (introduces a speech by Mentor); 7.158 (old and wise councillor Echeneus); 16.399 (the good Suitor Amphimedon); 24.53 (Nestor), 453 (Halitherses). Halitherses will reappear in 24.451–66, where he warns the families of the Suitors, explicitly referring back to this moment.

161–76 Halitherses’ speech consists of three parts: an exegesis of the omen (163–7a), his advice to the Suitors and the Ithacans (167b–169), and the recollection of an earlier prophecy, which are intended to strengthen his exegesis of the present one (170–6).

163–7 Halitherses wants to convince the Suitors and the Ithacans of the seriousness of the situation and hence does not give a precise, point-by-point, exegesis (as is found, e.g., in Il. 12.218–27), but immediately comes to the point: the omen announces the coming of a ‘great disaster’, the return of Odysseus the avenger (emphatically presented in the form of a polar expression: ‘for Odysseus will not long be far from his philoi, but already being nearby . . .’). Strictly speaking, Halitherses is mistaken, since at this point Odysseus is not nearby, plotting murder (but is still marooned with Calypso).\(^{17}\) This seems to be an instance of transference †: the narratees have in 1.26–95 and 253–69 been informed of Athena’s plans for Odysseus’ return and their knowledge is transferred to Halitherses.

171–6 This passage is an instance of the ‘recalled prophecy’ motif: in the Homeric epics persons often recall prophecies from the past at the moment they are – about to be – fulfilled; cf. 5.300–2; 8.564–71; 9.507–16; 10.330–2; 13.172–8; and 18.257–71nn.; Il. 2.299–330, 348–53; 9.410–16; 18.8–11; and 21.277–8.\(^{18}\)

---

It is also an instance of the ‘Odysseus departs’ motif: the recollection of events at the moment of Odysseus’ departure for Troy; cf. 226–7 (Odysseus entrusts his household to Mentes); 18.257–71 (he instructs Penelope when to remarry); 19.255–60 (Penelope packs his suitcase); and 23.175–6 (Odysseus’ appearance at the moment of his departure).\(^\text{19}\) Cf. also the ‘left behind’ motif.

174–6 This is the first of three announcements concerning the circumstances of Odysseus’ nostos; cf. Polyphemus in 9.534–5 and Tiresias in 11.113–17 (also, very briefly, Athena in 13.131–2; Helen in 15.176–7). There are some recurrent elements and some variants, depending on the speaker, addressee, and situation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Halitherses: Ithacans</th>
<th>Polyphemus: Odysseus</th>
<th>Tiresias: Odysseus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>many sorrows</td>
<td>Odysseus will come home having suffered miserably after having lost all his companions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incognito</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the twentieth year</td>
<td>late</td>
<td>late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>on a strange ship</td>
<td>on a strange ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>finding sorrows at home</td>
<td>finding sorrows at home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Halitherses, addressing the Ithacans and Suitors, refers to Odysseus’ incognito return (cf. 13.429–38n.), while Polyphemus and Tiresias, addressing Odysseus on his way home, refer to the ship which will eventually bring him home. Polyphemus and Tiresias are quoted by Odysseus, who is addressing the Phaeacians; the mention of ‘a strange ship’ subtly reminds them of their promise to escort him home on one of their ships. Halitherses gives the exact year of Odysseus’ return, which brings home to the Ithacans that now the moment of Odysseus’ return has come; the other two speak of a vague and emotionally laden ‘late’. For Odysseus it is important to know that he will find new sorrows at home (sc. the Suitors); this detail of course is lacking in Halitherses’ version, whose entire speech is aimed at warning the Suitors that a disaster is about to befall themselves.

177–207 For once *Eurymachus forgets his usual poise and diplomacy and speaks in an emotional and aggressive way: ‘old man, go home and

\(^{19}\) Jones (1992).
prophecy to your children, lest they suffer evil (mixture of sarcasm and intimidation). I am much better at interpreting these things. Not all birds are ‘fateful’ (Eurymachus’ words have the ring of a gnomic utterance, but this may be no more than a rhetorical trick, to present as a general truth what is in fact his personal opinion. He is undermining Halitherses’ authority as seer). Odysseus has died far away (an – unfounded – alternative for Halitherses’ announcement of Odysseus’ imminent return in 163–76). If only you could have died with him (intimidation). Then you would not have stirred up Telemachus, hoping to get a present from him (undermining Halitherses’ authority through accusation of bribery). If you, an older man, again stir up a younger man, it will be all the worse for him (indirect intimidation of Telemachus) and we will punish you (intimidation of Halitherses). I give Telemachus the following advice: let your mother return to her father (repetition of Antinous’ suggestion in 113–14). For we will not stop, I think (ironic), the harsh courting. We do not fear Telemachus of long speeches (like Antinous in 1.384–5, Eurymachus comments on Telemachus opening his mouth for the first time) nor do we bother about your prophecy, which will remain unfulfilled (undermining of Halitherses’ authority) and by which you only make yourself hateful (intimidation). Telemachus’ goods will wretchedly be devoured and there will be no compensation (reaction to Telemachus’ remark of 141–5), as long as Penelope puts off marriage (echo of Antinous in 90 and 115). But we will continue vying with each other because of her excellence (echo of Antinous’ compliment in 116–22).

182–3 When a Suitor states that Odysseus has died this has quite a different ring than when voiced by Odysseus’ philoi; cf. 1.158–68n. They simply believe what is most convenient for themselves.

208–23 Announcing his intention to go on a trip, Telemachus repeats almost verbatim Athena’s words in 1.279–92, except of course for the last part, the revenge on the Suitors (1.294–6). Thus he shows himself able to leave things unsaid.

211 Telemachus concludes that not only the gods (cf. Athena’s instructions in 1.253–305n.) know enough, but also the Ithacans. Elsewhere, too, speakers acknowledge the importance of the Ithacan people; cf. 3.214–15 and 16.378–82.

225–8 Mentor is introduced in a chunk of explicit narratorial characterization †, which is tailored to the direct context: in the ensuing speech he will show himself to be an old friend of Odysseus and exercise the caretaker
function assigned to him. His speech is further ‘plugged’ through the commendatory speech-introduction 228 (cf. 157–60n.). Athena will assist Telemachus and later Odysseus in the guise of this same Mentor; cf. 260–97n. The real Mentor is mentioned again in 4.655–6 and 17.68, but no longer plays an active role.

226–7 An instance of the *Odysseus departs’ motif.

229–41 Mentor’s intervention ignores Telemachus’ request for a ship and reopens the question of the Suitors’ presence in the palace. This lack of correspondence has worried Analytic scholars, but it can be given sense:20 being ignorant of the divine background of Telemachus’ plans (Telemachus having left out Athena’s instruction to take revenge; cf. 208–23n.), Mentor quite naturally interprets the boy’s announcement that he is going away as a sign of resignation and, since he is the one responsible for the maintenance of Odysseus’ household, undertakes one last attempt to rouse the Ithacans against the Suitors.

He tries to reach his goal in the following way: ‘it does not pay to be a good king, since no one here recalls good Odysseus (appeal to loyalty). I do not begrudge the Suitors their criminal behaviour (heavily ironic; the profusion of negative terms makes clear his real feelings: *ἀγήνορας, ‘arrogant’; ἔργα βίαια, ‘forceful deeds’, and κακορραφής, ‘planning of evil’) – for they are in fact staking their lives (hardly veiled threat), forcefully eating Odysseus’ goods in the conviction that he will not come back (reaction to Eurymachus’ claim that Odysseus is dead in 182–3), – but I am wroth at the rest of the Ithacans. Being so many you could with words restrain these men (peptalk).’

Although he is addressing the Ithacans and talking about the Suitors, Mentor intends his (warning) words to be heard by the Suitors, too; an instance of the ‘indirect dialogue’ device †.

229–34 Mentor is not the only one to stress the fact that *Odysseus is a good king; cf. Telemachus (46–7, 71–2), Penelope (4.687–9; and cf. 16.424–32), Athena (5.8–12), and cf. the predictions of Tiresias (11.136–7) and Zeus (24.482–6), the reverse simile in 19.109–14, and Eumaeus’ talk about his gentle master (14.61–8 and 138–47). This plugging of Odysseus is one of the narrator’s strategies intended to make the narratees accept the bloody outcome of the story (cf. 1.224–9n.); Odysseus is not a cruel king,

such as Echetus (cf. 18.85–7), but only once will act violently against his own people (the Suitors), who deserve to be punished.

235 An instance of a ‘parents and children’ comparison.

242–56 Leocritus, one of the sixteen Suitors referred to by name (cf. 1.367–424n.), is given no explicit introduction by the narrator. He characterizes himself by his speech (his only one in the Odyssey). In 22.294–6 he will be killed by Telemachus.

His speech is a clear specimen of psychological warfare: ‘Mentor, mischievous man, wild in your wits (abuse), what did you say, exhorting them to stop us. It would be difficult even for more men (catch-word technique †: πλεόνεσσα picks up Mentor’s πολλοί of 241) to fight with us (intimidation) over a meal (understatement). Even if Odysseus himself desired to chase the dining Suitors from his house, he would suffer a bad fate, if he fought with more men (by now Leocritus has cleverly turned Mentor’s argument that the Ithacans surpass the Suitors in number into that of the Suitors surpassing Odysseus in number). You did not speak properly (return to opening of his speech, by way of conclusion of this part of his speech). But let the people go home (dismissing the assembly, he cuts short all further discussion), and as for him (not addressing Telemachus directly, he makes clear that he does not take the boy or his announcement to leave on a trip very seriously), his father’s friends Mentes and Halitherses will bring about his trip (ironic). But, I think (the modifier is ironic), he will never go on that trip.’

244–51 An instance of the ‘disturbed meal’ motif: Leocritus anticipates Odysseus attacking the Suitors while they are eating and suffering defeat at their hands. Odysseus will indeed attack them during a meal, but succeed in killing them.

The passage also is an instance of the ‘one against many’ motif: it would be difficult even for Odysseus to beat the Suitors, who are more numerous (πλεόνεσσα).

258–9 In typically Homeric fashion the narrator dutifully records the fulfilment of Leocritus’ order of 252. In the present situation, however, the lines have an additional force: Athena had urged Telemachus to incite the Suitors to disperse and return to their own places (1.274); what happens is that the Ithacans disperse and return to their own houses (without helping Telemachus), while the Suitors go to Odysseus’ house (ignoring the requests and warnings to leave the palace). For the emphatic reference to Odysseus’
house, cf. 1.103–4n. No action by Mentor or Halitherses is recorded. As Leocritus had ironically foreseen in 253–4, they are unable to help him get a ship.

260–97 The scene between Telemachus and ‘Mentor’/Athena consists of a combination of a ‘prayer’ type-scene (260–7a) and a ‘god meets mortal’ scene (267b–297).

260–7 This is the first instance of a ‘prayer’ type-scene; cf. 3.54–62, 375–85; 4.750–67; 5.444–53; 6.323–31; 9.526–36; 13.355–65; 17.238–46; 20.58–90, 97–102, and 111–21n.21 The elements are (i) speech-introduction with verb of praying and – optional – praying gesture (the narrator tells us that Telemachus prayed to ‘Athena’, whereas Telemachus himself does not know the identity of the deity he is praying to; cf. 1.118n.); (ii) invocation of the deity; (iii) claim to favour on the basis of past or future service to the god, or past service by the god; (iv) request; (v) speech-capping with verb of praying and the deity’s response. In the present instance, (i) the gesture of raising the hands is replaced by a ritual washing of the hands and supplemented with the detail of going to the seashore (260–1; cf. 4.750; 12.336–7); the (ii) invocation and (iii) claim to favour are merged (262–5a: ‘hear me, you who, a god, came yesterday and urged me to go on a ship’); instead of making (iv) a request, Telemachus states his problem (265b–266; the Ithacans, in particular the Suitors, are putting off his trip, sc. by not helping him with a ship); (v) speech-capping, but instead of the usual response ‘she heard him/his prayer’, Athena comes to him.

267–97 In a ‘god meets mortal’ scene Athena appears to Telemachus in mortal disguise, which perhaps is ultimately seen through by Telemachus (cf. 296–7n.). For her second confrontation with Telemachus Athena adopts the disguise of Mentor,22 since now what is needed is not an outsider (the Taphian guest-friend Mentes), but an insider (a ‘companion of his father’: 286; cf. 225 and 254), who can procure a ship from the island for him; for Telemachus’ helpers, cf. 1.96–324n. She makes Leocritus’ ironic words of 253–4 (‘Mentor and Halitherses will help you’) come true after all. She will continue her ‘Mentor’ role for a long time: she reassumes it in 399–406 and accompanies Telemachus to Pylos, keeping the promise she made in

287 (‘I will come with you’), until she leaves in 3.371–85. For a unique comp-
lication of her impersonation of Mentor, cf. 4.649–56n. Athena will again assume the disguise of Mentor in 22.206ff. (killing of the Suitors) and 24.503ff. (confrontation between Odysseus and the families of the Suitors).


261 The narrator tells us that Telemachus prayed to ‘Athena’, whereas Telemachus himself does not know the identity of the deity he is praying to (262); cf. 1.118n.

270–95 Athena counters Telemachus’ despondent prayer with a tripar-
tite pep talk: ‘you can do it, since you resemble your father (270–80), don’t bother about the Suitors, their demise is near (281–4), and I will help you with your trip (285–95)’.

270–80 Once more, *Telemachus’ resemblance to Odysseus is noted. The structure of Athena’s argument is somewhat convoluted:

A You will turn out to be no coward or senseless person (270),
B if you resemble your father in courage (271),
   such a man he was in accomplishing word and deed (272).
C Your voyage will not remain unaccomplished (273).
   b’ But if you are not Odysseus’ and Penelope’s son (274),
   c’ I have no hope that you will accomplish what you want (275),
   d for only few sons equal or surpass their father (276–7).
      (a *gnomic utterance; note the repetition of πατεῖς and the paradoxical nature of juxtaposed ‘more are less good’).
A’ But since you will turn out to be no coward or senseless person (278)
B’ and resemble your father in cleverness (279),
C’ there is hope that you will accomplish what you want (280).

The word ‘accomplish’, which is repeated four times, is meant to counter Leocritus’ disparaging concluding words, indicating that he does not expect Telemachus to ‘accomplish’ his trip (256).

283–4 A *prolepsis of Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors, notably by a goddess.

285–95 The last part of Athena’s pep talk (285–95) is also a *‘table of contents’ speech:
296–7 The information ‘Thus spoke Athena’ certainly comes from the narrator, but how about ‘after he had heard the voice of the god’? Is the narrator intruding upon Telemachus’ focalization (shifter: ‘he heard’) or did the youth, though hearing the voice of a mortal, σὺδήν (cf. Μέντορι εἶδομένη σὺδήν: 268), understand that ‘Mentor’ was a god, the god he had invoked in 262–5? In 372 he will tell Euryclea that his trip is willed by a god, but here he may be referring to his meeting with ‘Mentes’/a god in Book 1.

298–336 The scene of Telemachus’ private meeting with the Suitors brings us the fulfilment of Athena’s first order (cf. 288). The structure of the exchange is as follows:

Antinous A (hypocritically) Give up your angry plans against us (303–4)
B and eat with us (305).
C The Ithacans will provide you with a ship (306–8).

Telemachus B’ (angry) I no longer want to eat with you (310–13).
A’ Now that I am an adult, I intend to kill you, either going to Pylos or here (314–17).
C’ I will go as a passenger, since you did not want to give me a ship and crew (318–20).

Suitors A” (ironically) Surely Telemachus is planning our death. Maybe he will bring helpers from Pylos or Sparta or bring poison from Ephyra (325–30).

Suitors C” (ironically) Who knows whether Telemachus himself perishes on his ship far away from his philoi. This would increase our work, since we would have to divide his patrimony (332–6).

The Suitors – still (cf. 1.367–424n.) – do not take Telemachus seriously. Their hopeful anticipation of the dangers of his trip (332–3; for this type of rhetorical question, cf. 3.216–17n.) and feigned complaint about the trouble his death would bring them (334–6) contrast with Euryclea’s

genuine concern in the next scene (337–81); an instance of juxtaposition †.

The scene will have a follow-up in 4.625–74, when they find out, to their surprise and dismay, that he has indeed departed.


303–8 The narrator provides no clues on how the narratees are to take Antinous’ words and gestures (he smiles and takes Telemachus’ hand). However, the very fact that he invites Telemachus to eat with them ‘as before’ is insulting, after Telemachus’ emphatic and repeated request to stop the feasting in his palace. Again, his assurances that the Ithacans will give him a ship and ‘selected’ rowers (ἐξείτους ἐρήτος is a unique combination), so as to reach Pylos ‘all the quicker’ and enquire? after his ‘noble’ father (ἀγαυὸς ποτρός is a unique combination; cf. the variant without epithet in 4.701; 5.19; 14.179; 17.43) rings as falsely as Leocritus’ earlier assurances that Mentor and Halitherses would give him a ship (253–4). This speech shows us that *Antinous can be – cunningly – diplomatic instead of openly aggressive.

310–20 Provoked by Antinous’ speech Telemachus now reveals what he had held back during the assembly (cf. 208–23n.): his intention to kill the Suitors. At the same time he is clever enough not to reveal the god’s promise to provide him with a ship and crew (cf. 287). The narratees, however, can hear the echo of Athena’s earlier speeches to him (alluded to by Telemachus in ‘hearing the words of others’) in ‘now that I am grown up’ (313–14; cf. 1.296–7) and ‘my trip will not be ineffective’ (318; cf. 273).

313–14 For the relevance to the main story of Telemachus’ coming of age, cf. 1.296–7n.

323–37 The scene ends with two actual tis-speeches (323–37): anonymous speeches, which are put into the mouth of one person (τις), but, as the iterative verb of speaking indicates, give expression to the collective feelings of a group.24 The Odyssey contains fourteen actual tis-speeches, of which the majority (eleven) are spoken by the Suitors: 4.768–72; 8.328–33; 10.37–46; 13.167–70; 17.482–8; 18.72–5, 111–17, 400–4; 20.373–84; 21.361–6, 396–400, 401–4; and 23.148–52. They are often marked by mockery or derision. For the accompanying gesture, cf. 20.373–84n. In the Iliad we find a

24 Hentze (1905), de Jong (1987b), and Schneider (1996).
combination of two actual *tis*-speeches, when the points of view of two different parties are represented; here (and cf. 21.396–400 + 401–4) the two *tis*-speeches are both spoken by the Suitors. As line 323 makes clear, their words are intended to mock and insult Telemachus. They do not, however, address the youth directly, but talk with each other about him; the device of indirect dialogue underscores the condescending attitude they adopt towards him at this stage of the story. Contrast their *tis*-speech in 20.373–84, where they do address him.

324 The Suitors are of course young men (cf. the vocative κοὶροι in 2.96 = 19.141 = 24.131; 17.174), but their youth is repeatedly stressed (they are referred to as νέοι by Athena in 13.425, by themselves in 17.479; 20.361; 21.179, and by the narrator here and in 331; 4.769; 17.294, 482; 18.6; 20.375; 21.184, 361, 401). This stress is significant: in the Homeric epics youth is regularly associated with recklessness and impetuosity (cf. *Il.* 3.108 and 23.589–90), just as old age stands for wisdom (cf. 7.156–8n.). The collaborating servants in Odysseus’ palace are also young (cf. 15.330–4 and 18.321–5), as are the Phaeacians who far from subtly challenge Odysseus to compete with them in an athletic contest (cf. 8.104–468n.). By contrast, Telemachus (3.124–5), Nestor’s son Pisistratus (4.204–5), and Nausicaa (7.292–4) represent the type of the ‘sensible youngster’. The good servants Euryclea and Eumaeus are old. The opposition ‘young–old’ will become dramatically relevant, when Odysseus refuses to have his feet washed by young servants but insists on an old one (19.317–507).

Allowing himself a *narratorial intervention*, the narrator openly calls the Suitors ῥεγνῷν, ‘overweening’. This is one of the many negative qualifications given to the Suitors in the *Odyssey* (eleven out of twelve instances concern them, seven times it is used by the narrator); cf. 1.224–9n.

332–3 For the significance of the comparison of Telemachus’ trip with that of Odysseus, cf. Introduction to 1.

337–81 In this scene Telemachus turns to the execution of Athena’s second order: to prepare provisions (cf. 289–91; ὁν τὸν ἂμιπεφρεῦσαν: 349 = 290, ἀλφίτα . . . ἐγείραφεσθαί δοροῖσιν in 354 = ἀλφίτα . . . δέρμασιν ἐν τυκιοῦσιν in 290–1). Provisions are not automatically mentioned at moments of departure and when they are, this has a function: 3.479–80

(symbolic: indication of Telemachus’ rise in status); 5.265–7 (symbolic: sign of Calypso’s loving care); 6.76–80 (symbolic: indication of Nausicaa’s position as beloved child; practical: Odysseus will profit from these provisions, too); and 13.69 (symbolic: indication of Odysseus’ rise in status). The function of the present scene, which is the most expanded instance, is symbolic: it shows Euryclea’s concern and affection, which contrasts so strongly with the indifference of the Suitors in the preceding scene. The devoted servant, crying over the departure of her ‘child’ (and cf. ἀγαπητός, ‘beloved’ in 365), takes the place of Penelope; cf. Eumaeus reacting as a ‘father’ to Telemachus’ return in 16.12–24. Her apprehension (i) creates tension for the narratees (even though they have reason to expect that the trip, which originates with and takes place under the aegis of Athena, will end well, the insertion of fearful anticipations by characters is a common Homeric device to create suspense) and (ii) enhances Telemachus’ kleos (cf. 1.94–5n.). Athena had not instructed Telemachus to leave Penelope uninformed about his trip. The actorial motivation † for her exclusion is Telemachus’ concern not to ruin her beauty (cf. 376n.), the narratorial motivation † is to anticipate her exclusion from the much more important plot of Odysseus’ return and revenge (cf. 16.4–219n.). The scene will have a follow-up in 4.675–767, when Penelope finds out about Telemachus’ trip and Euryclea explains why she did not tell her mistress about it.

The passage is an instance of a *store-room* scene (cf. Appendix F): (i) descent (337); (ii) description of the store-room (337–8a; the – unique – detail ‘of his father’ sets the tone; throughout this scene absent Odysseus will be invoked, cf. 342–3 and 350–2); (iii) contents (338b–342a); (vi) history of one of the objects (342b–343; instead of the customary analepsis † we find a prolepsis †: the jars were standing, ‘in case, as was strongly hoped for, Odysseus should return’26); (iv) lock and guard (344–7); (v) selection (348–80; expanded into a conversation); (vii) special value of an object selected (350–2); (viii) return (381).

Like Hecuba in II. 24.193–237, Euryclea tries to prevent a man from going on a dangerous mission; cf. especially 361 ≈ II. 24.200 (‘she cried out in distress’), 363–4 ≈ II. 24.202–1 (‘have you lost your mind?’), and 364–5 ≈ 24.203 (‘why do you wish to go . . . you an only child/alone?’).

The dialogue has the following structure:

**Telemachus**

A  Give me wine and barley (349–55).

B  You are the only one to know. For tonight I will come to collect it, when my mother sleeps (356–8).

C  For I will go to Sparta and Pylos (359),

D  to find out about my father’s nostos (360).

**Euryclea**

C’  Why do you want to travel so far over land (363–5a)?

D’  Your father is dead

(she has given up hope concerning Odysseus; cf. 1.158–68n.)

and the Suitors will ambush you (365b–368).

(an – unintentional – prolepsis † of the ambush of 4.660ff.,)

C”  So stay here and don’t wander over the sea (369–70).

**Telemachus**

C’’  Don’t worry. This plan is not without a god (372).

(for the interpretation of ‘not without a god’, cf. 296–7n.)

B’  But swear not to tell my mother for the time being (373–6).

**narrator**

(execution) Euryclea swore and gave wine and barley (377–80)

---

357 Without having been instructed on this point by Athena, Telemachus shrewdly decides to sail at night. Other instances of secret night-time sailing are 4.786 (Suitors lying in ambush for Telemachus); 13.35 (Phaeacians conveying Odysseus home); and 15.471–5 (pirates kidnapping Eumaeus).

365–6  Euryclea has given up hope concerning Odysseus; cf. 1.158–68n.

367–8  A second foreshadowing of the Suitors’ ambush (cf. 1.251), which will be organized in 4.660ff.

373–8  A regular instance of the *oath* type-scene: proposal for the oath in direct speech, followed by the actual swearing, presented as a summary.

374  For the ‘eleven or twelve days’, cf. 4.587–619n.

376  For the motif of Penelope ‘ruining her beauty’, cf. 4.749 (Euryclea quoting Telemachus); 18.172–4 (Eurynome); 19.263–4 (‘the beggar’/ Odysseus); and cf. Penelope’s own perspective in 18.251–3n.

382–426  This scene brings the execution of Athena’s third point (cf. 291–5). It is an instance of the *departure by ship* type-scene; cf. 4.778–86 + 842–3; 8.48–55 + 13.18–80; 11.1–9, 636–40; 12.142–52; 15.217–94nn.; II. 1.308–12 and 478–80; (mere mentions) 3.153–7; 9.469–72, 561–4; and
Its elements are: (i) a crew is selected; (ii) those who are to sail make their way to the ship; (iii) the ship is drawn to the sea; (iv) made ready for the voyage; and (v) moored; (vi) equipment and provisions are put on board; (vii) passengers and crew go on board; (viii) the moorings are cast off; (ix) the crew rows; (x) a god sends a favourable wind; (xi) the sailing is prepared, i.e., the mast is made fast and the sails are hoisted. The present version of this type-scene displays a number of variations which are the result of the special – secretive – circumstances of Telemachus’ voyage. (i) Athena, in the guise of Telemachus, selects a crew (382–5) and asks Noemon for a ship (386–7; a unique addition, which takes the form of an abbreviated *‘god meets mortal’ scene; all speeches are merely represented in indirect speech or summarized); (iii) at nightfall Noemon alone draws the ship to the sea (388–9a; normally this is done by the crew, e.g., 4.780); (iv) makes it ready for the voyage (389b–390, a general description instead of a concrete one, such as is found, e.g., in 4.781–3) and (v) moors it ‘at the very end of the harbour’ (391a); now (ii) the crew makes its way to the ship (391b–392) and Athena – in a unique expansion – makes the Suitors fall asleep and, assuming the guise of Mentor again, exhorts Telemachus to go to the shore (393–408); (vi) the provisions are put on board (409–15, divided into order and execution; in his speech Telemachus explains to his crew the secrecy of the undertaking); (vii) Telemachus and ‘Mentor’/Athena go on board (416–18a, Athena takes the pilot position ‘near the stern’, while Telemachus sits next to her); (viii) the moorings are cast off (418b); (vii) the crew goes on board (419); (x) Athena sends a favourable wind (420–1); and (xi) they prepare to sail (422–6).

382 The ‘X thought of something else’ motif highlights a new, often sudden or unexpected turn in the story; cf. 393; 4.219, 795; 5.382; 6.112, 251; 16.409; 18.187; 23.242, and 344. The X usually (eight out of ten instances) is *Athena in her role of ‘director’ of the story of the Odyssey. Here Athena is carrying out a premeditated action (cf. 291–5), and the motif is used to bring about the – abrupt – change of scene † from Telemachus to Athena; cf. 16.409.

386–7 Noemon figures only here and in 4.630–57 (where he discloses to the Suitors that he has lent his ship to Telemachus). Apart from the name of his father, no particulars are revealed about him. His words and deeds char-

---

acterize him as friendly (he gives Telemachus a ship, sympathizing with his plight), and perhaps slightly naive (he has no idea of the Suitors’ hostility towards Telemachus).

393 The *‘X thought of something else’ motif introduces two actions which were not announced by ‘Mentor’/Athena in 291–5: she puts the Suitors to sleep (394–8; an instance of the *‘sleep’ motif) and personally comes to collect Telemachus (399–406).

399–406 Athena again assumes the disguise of Mentor, which she will not shed for a long time; cf. 260–97n. For the narrator referring to her as ‘Athena’ (405) and ‘god’ (406), cf. 1.118n.

415 The narrator not only usually records in verbatim detail the execution of an order, but may also explicitly note that ‘X acted as Y ordered’; cf. 6.212–13; 8.49; 15.553–4; 22.190–1, 255; and 24.492.

427–34 The actual sea voyage takes up only a few lines, as is customary (cf. 4.842–3; 11.10–13; 12.152; 15.294–300; II. 1.312, 481–3); the only expanded version is 13.81–92.28 Only here do we find a libation at sea (libations usually precede a voyage, cf. 3.332–42n.); another ‘anomaly’ caused by the secret nature of Telemachus’ voyage? The dramatic irony † of Telemachus making a libation to Athena in the presence of – a disguised – Athena prefigures the sustained dramatic irony of the goddess’ stay in disguise amongst the Pylians; cf. 3.1–485n.

28 Arend (1933: 86).
BOOK THREE

Book 3 contains the third, fourth, and fifth day, which bring Telemachus’ visit to Nestor (1–485) and his voyage to Sparta (486–97); cf. Appendix A.

1–485 Telemachus’ stay with Nestor takes the form of an *(overnight)* ‘visit’ type-scene: he (ii) arrives and (iii) finds the person he is looking for (doubled: 4–33); (iv) is received (by the Pylians in general: 34–5, and by Nestor’s son Pisistratus in particular: 36–64); (v) is given a meal (65–7); (vi) converses with his host (68–385); is given (viii) a bed (396–401); (vii) a bath (464–9), and (x) an escort to his next destination (announcement: 324–6, acceptance: 368–70, execution: 474–85).

The visit to Nestor invites comparison with the visit to Menelaus (4.1ff.); the technique of juxtaposition †. The narratees may observe the following differences between the two households: simplicity versus luxury (Nestor’s palace and the objects in it are hardly described at all, whereas Menelaus’ palace evokes the admiration of Telemachus and the riches of its interior are repeatedly pointed out), and warmth versus tension (Nestor’s family personally takes care of Telemachus; cf. 34–64n.; Menelaus’ possession of one of the most beautiful women of his time is overshadowed by haunting memories of the past). Nestor and Menelaus pose a challenge to young Telemachus, who looks upon these venerable heroes as godlike figures (3.246; 4.160): in the case of Nestor he has to overcome his shyness in the presence of an older man (cf. 24), in the case of Menelaus his awe for a rich man (cf. 4.69–75 and 158–60).

The visit to Nestor also fulfils an important contrastive function *vis-à-vis* the situation on Ithaca, described in Books 1–2: here we have a society in

---

1 Reece (1993: 66–7).
harmony, where people are friendly and god-fearing, and obey the rules of hospitality, where feasting always takes place in conjunction with sacrifice, drinking with libation.

As for Telemachus’ main objective – to acquire information about his father – the visit is not very successful; it is, however, conducive to his maturation (cf. esp. 4–67n.) and the confirmation of his identity as Odysseus’ son (cf. 122–5n.).

Nestor is not given an explicit narratorial characterization †, but there are stray pieces of actorial characterization: by ‘Mentor’/Athena (20), Nestor himself (126–9), and Telemachus (244–6). He characterizes himself, through his words, deeds, and stories: he is hospitable, pious (4–67n. and 159, 173–5, 178–9), just (20, 244–6), and a good counsellor (126–9, 317–22).

During the first part of his visit to Pylos Telemachus is assisted by Athena in the shape of ‘Mentor’ (cf. 2.260–97n.) and we are dealing with a *‘god meets mortal’ scene; in 371–85 she will leave the mortals with an epiphany. Athena’s prolonged incognito stay amongst the Pylians creates much delightful ambiguity (4–67n.) and dramatic irony (41–2, 43–50, 201–52, 205–9, 329–95nn.).

1–3 A unique description of *sunrise.

4–67 The first stage of Telemachus’ visit combines elements from three different type-scenes: the *‘visit’ type-scene, the *‘sacrifice’ type-scene, and the *‘landing’ type-scene:

| 4–5a | arrival | (visit + landing) |
| 5b–9 | situation found: | (visit) |
| | preparation of sacrificial meat | (sacrifice) |
| 10a | entering the harbour | (landing) |
| 10b–11a | furling the sails | (landing) |
| 11b | anchoring and tying the moorings | (landing) |
| 11c–12 | disembarking | (landing) |
| (13–30 interruption: conversation between Telemachus and ‘Mentor’/Athena) |
| 31 | second arrival | (visit) |
| 32–3 | second situation found: | (visit) |
| | preparation of meat for meal | (sacrifice) |
| 34–64 | reception | (visit) |
| 65–7 | meal | (visit + sacrifice) |
By doubling the arrival and situation found, the narrator creates an effect of ‘zooming in’: in 4–9 Telemachus and ‘Mentor’/Athena arrive in Pylos and, while still on board, see the Pylians engaged in sacrifice; in 31–3, having left the ship, they come to the place where the Pylians are gathered and by then are close enough to discern individuals (Nestor, his sons, and servants); similar zooming in effects are found in 5.279–493; 9.166–223; and 24.220–1nn.

The situation found has a characterizing function (cf. 1.106–12n.): this is a society where religious values are held in esteem. In the two days of Telemachus’ stay no fewer than two sacrifices (here and 417–73), three libations (40–64, 332–42, 388–94), and three prayers are recorded (55–61, 380–4, 444–6).

The interruption at a strategic moment serves to bring out the goddess’ role as mentor and the shyness of the youth, who feels nervous at the idea of having to address the venerable Nestor (24, anticipated by Athena in 14). The narratees may note the ambiguity of Athena assuring Telemachus that ‘a god’ (she carefully uses *δαιμόν, a word typically used by mortal speakers) will advise him what to say, and inserting the modifier ‘I think’ (27), when in fact she knows for sure that Telemachus was ‘not born and reared without the gods’ will’.

34–64 The typical element of the *reception is adapted to the outdoor situation: (b) the visitors are seen (34, note the use of *ξείνους, ‘strangers’, which reflects the Pylians’ focalization); (c) the hosts – first the Pylians, then Pisistratus – hurry towards them (34b, 36); (d) take their hands (35a, 37a); (g) urge them to sit/give them a seat (35b, 37b–39); Pisistratus gives them part of the sacrificial meat and wine (40–1a, an addition related to the circumstances of the sacrifice) and (e), instead of speaking words of welcome, invites the newly arrived guests to offer libation and pray (41b–50), which they do (51–64). The warm reception contrasts, on the one hand, with the Suitors’ disregard of ‘Mentes’ in 1.113–35n., and on the other hand, with the more hesitant Spartan hospitality in 4.20–43n.

The prominence of Nestor’s son Pisistratus in this scene prepares the narratees for his later role as Telemachus’ companion and (second) helper; cf. 1.96–324n. At the court of Menelaus he will play a central role, not only as Telemachus’ spokesman (4.155–67) and mentor (15.49–55), but also as a character in his own right (4.186–211). His role will come to an end in 15.202–16. The qualities which he displays during his first performance
make it clear why he is suited to play this role: he is pious (43–8), hospitable (36–41), and respectful towards elders (49–50). He is further recommended by being made the object of Athena’s – approving – focalization: she was pleased because the ‘sensible (and) judicious man’ gave her the cup first (52–3). In 400–1 we will hear about another – practical – reason why he is chosen to accompany Telemachus: he is unmarried and therefore free to go.

The fact that Pisistratus himself serves the meat and wine is a first manifestation of the personal care which the Pylian royal family bestows on Telemachus, cf. Nestor putting Telemachus to bed (397–9), Nestor’s whole family helping during the sacrifice (417–73), Nestor’s daughter washing Telemachus (464), and Nestor’s sons harnessing the horses (475–8). No wonder that in 380–1 Nestor asks for *kleos ‘for himself and his children and his wife’.

The guests are given the place of honour next to the host; a significant seating arrangement.

In his speech-introduction the narrator alerts the narratees to the dramatic irony † of the situation (cf. next note), by employing an unusually emphatic reference to Athena as the addressee of Pisistratus’ speech (line 42 recurs thrice in the Odyssey, 13.252, 371; 24.547, but never as part of a speech-introduction).

Pisistratus’ speech exemplifies the piety of the Pylians and his own good character, and offers the first examples of dramatic irony † (cf. 1–485n.). A goddess (in Pisistratus’ perception a mortal man; cf. ξεῖνε in 43) is asked to pray to another god; specifically, Athena is asked to pray to her opponent in the Odyssey, Poseidon, Pisistratus also lectures Athena on the gods, employing in 48 a *gnomic utterance (‘for all men need the gods’).

For the importance of Athena’s embedded focalization † (shifter ‘she was pleased, because . . .’), cf. 34–64n. Line 53 repeats almost verbatim line 50, except for the subtle change in gender: Pisistratus perceives ‘Mentor’/Athena as a man (hence προτέρω), Athena thinks of herself as a female (hence προτέρη).

Athena keeps up her impersonation of Mentor and prays according to a regular *‘prayer’ type-scene: (i) speech-introduction with verb of praying; (ii) invocation; no (iii) reference to past or future services (this was perhaps too much to ask of Athena, even when pretending to be Mentor . . .);

(iv) request (here threefold, related to Nestor and his sons, the other Pylians, and Telemachus and herself. The narratees may note the ambiguity † of Athena asking Poseidon to let Telemachus, the son of his arch-enemy Odysseus, return home); (v) speech-capping with verb of praying and deity’s response (only here Athena acts as goddess rather than ‘Mentor’ and – uniquely – herself fulfils the prayer instead of her addressee Poseidon).

64 When two very similar actions are carried out shortly after each other in Homer, the second one is usually presented briefly, with the help of the summarizing formula ὅς δ’ αὐτῶς, ‘in like way’; cf. 20.238–9 after 235–7; 21.203–4 after 199–202; 22.114 after 113; 24.409–11 after 397–408; and II. 3.339 after 328–38.

68–385 The conversation between host and guest consists of five parts: an opening exchange, which introduces the reason for Telemachus’ visit (68–101); an initial long narrative by Nestor (102–200); an intermediary exchange, which discusses Telemachus’ revenge on the Suitors (201–52); a second long narrative by Nestor (253–328); and a concluding exchange, which is centred around ‘Mentor’/Athena’s departure (329–85).

68–101 The important ritual of the *identification of the guest in the case of Nestor occurs at its normal place, at the opening of the after dinner conversation. He asks three questions: (A) ‘who are you?’ (actually, he could have learned Telemachus’ name from Athena’s prayer in 55–61), (B) ‘where are you from?’, and (C) ‘what brings you here. Are you perhaps free-booters?’

Telemachus answers Nestor’s questions in parallel order †: (B’) we come from Ithaca (80–1; note the catch-word technique †: ἡπόθεν picks up πόθεν of 71) and (C’) our business is to inquire after Odysseus (82–101; πρὴξεις picks up πρὴξιν of 72). Why doesn’t he start with A’, giving his name? He does reveal his identity by referring to Odysseus as ‘my father’ (83, 98), but apparently is too shy or uncertain about himself to say ‘I am Telemachus’; cf. 4.69–167, where likewise he does not immediately mention his name to Menelaus, which leads to a delayed recognition. Telemachus also does not reveal the name or identity of his companion; only once (in 240) does he address him as Mentor. This unobtrusiveness makes it all the more easy for Nestor later to recognize Athena in this mysterious companion (377–9).

The central part of his speech, the request for information about Odysseus (82–101), has the following structure:
a (request) I am looking for news about my father Odysseus, if perhaps you have heard it somewhere (82–4a),
b (appeal to common past) whom they say fought with you in Troy (84b–85).
c (appeal to pity) For of all the others we know where each died, but of him even his death is unknown (a summary priamel †). For no one can tell where he died, whether on sea or on land (86–91).
a′ (request) Therefore I beg you to report to me his sorrowful death, whether you have witnessed it yourself or have heard about it from another traveller (92–5a).
c′ (appeal to pity) For his mother bore him as an unfortunate man (95b).
a″ (request) Don’t spare my feelings but tell me what you have seen. I beg you (96–8a),
b′ (appeal to common past) if my father ever helped you in Troy (98b–100)
a″ (request) remember that and tell me accurately (101).

Following the lead of ‘Mentor’, who in 16 spoke of Odysseus as a dead man, Telemachus does not ask Nestor about the whereabouts of his father, but specifically about the manner of his death (88, 89–91, 93). His pessimism may be rhetorical: he wants to make clear that he is ready to face the worst possible case (cf. 96); for Telemachus’ changing utterances concerning Odysseus’ condition (dead or alive), cf. 1.353–5n. Note the typical use of *κεῖνος in 88 and 93 to refer to the absent Odysseus. Telemachus’ use of φασί, ‘they say’ and ποτε, ‘once’, in 84 has a similar distancing effect; for him, his father is not only removed in space but also in time.

77–8 Athena’s embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘in order that’ + optative and subjunctive) reminds the narratees of both the primary goal (information) and the secondary goal (*κλεος) of Telemachus’ trip (cf. 1.94–5n.); she reminded Telemachus of the primary goal in 15–16. Athena is the character whose unexpressed thoughts, in the form of embedded focalization, are most often presented to us (contrast impenetrable Penelope): cf. 4.800–1; 5.386–7, 492–3; 6.14, 113–14; 7.16–17; 8.21–3; 13.190–3; 15.293–4; 16.457–9; 17.362–3; 18.160–2, 347–8; 20.285–6; and 21.3–4. In this way the narratees are constantly informed about her plans and hence about the turn which the story is going to take; cf. 1.26–95n.

93–5 For the combination of seeing for oneself or hearing from someone who has seen for himself, cf. 8.491.
For the pathetic motif ‘his mother bore X to be Y’, cf. 12.125 and II. 24.540.

Nestor gives a lengthy answer, which does not, however, give Telemachus the information about Odysseus which he had asked for: ‘so I came back without news’ (184; his ἔπευθης echoes Telemachus’ ἔπευθέξα in 88). As a result, he will later suggest that Telemachus try Menelaus (317–28).

The structure of his speech is that of the free string †: taking his cue from Telemachus’ reference to the Trojan war (note the ‘catch-word’ technique †: ἐν ἑκέινῳ δῆμῳ in 103–4 picks up δῆμῳ ἐν Τρώων in 100), he starts his tale in Troy and then gives a chronological account of the nostos of the Greeks, which soon separates into a series of individual nostoi. This – fairly infrequent – structure here serves to characterize Nestor as an old man, who takes his time to dwell on the past (and to inform Telemachus about the glorious past of his father).

(emotional preamble) You make me recall all the suffering we endured during the Trojan war and its many deaths (103–17).

A For during nine years we fabricated evils against them with every kind of trick, until finally Zeus finished it (118–19).

There no one wanted to liken himself to Odysseus, who surpassed all in every kind of trick, your father (120–2a), (interrupts his story), if you truly are his son. Your manner of speaking does resemble his (122b–125).

(resumes his story) There Odysseus and I advised the Greeks in complete harmony (126–9).

(the stress on their harmony prepares the narratees for the discord to follow)

B After the fall of Troy there arose a discord between Menelaus, who wanted to return, and Agamemnon, who wanted to appease Athena first (130–52).

C We left with Menelaus, while the other half stayed with Agamemnon (153–8).

D After our arrival in Tenedus there again arose a discord, and Odysseus returned to Agamemnon (159–64).

(this is the last we hear of Odysseus; his story will be continued in 4.555–60)

E I, Diomedes, and Menelaus went to Lesbos. We deliberated whether to
return via the route north or south of Chios. A god suggested the first route and we reached Geraestus safely (165–79).

F First Diomedes came home, then I (180–3).

(no further mention of Menelaus; his story will be continued in 276ff.)

在过渡期 from an eyewitness report to a hearsay one) As for the others, I do not know whether they survived or died. But what I heard, I will tell you (184–6).

(cf. Telemachus in 93–5: ‘whether you saw it . . . or heard the tale from another traveller’)

G Neoptolemus, Philoctetes, and Idomeneus are reported to have come home safely, and as for Agamemnon, you yourself will have heard how he came home but was killed by Aegisthus, who in his turn was killed by Orestes (188–98).

(exhortation) You, too, must be brave (like Orestes) (199–200).

Nestor’s tale of the nostos of the Greeks covers the same ground as Phemius’ song; cf. 1.325–7n. It starts off the piecemeal distribution of the nostoi of Agamemnon, Odysseus (until the beginning of the Odyssey), and Menelaus; cf. Appendix C. His nostos, compared to that of other Troy veterans, is fortunate but unadventurous; cf. Introduction to I.

103–17 Long narratives in the Odyssey are typically introduced by an emotional preamble, in which the speaker indicates how much there is to tell and/or the pain (in one case, the joy) it gives him to tell his story and/or the difficulty of remembering everything; cf. 4.240–3, 492–8; 7.241–3; 9.3–15; 14.192–8; 15.390–402; 19.165–71, 221–4; and 23.264–7nn.

Nestor’s preamble, which is marked off by ring-composition (διζύος . . . ἐν ἐκείνῳ δήμῳ ἄνετλημεν: 103–4 = κεῖθι . . . πᾶθον . . . κακά: 116), consists of an expressive anacolouthon in 103–8 (he becomes so absorbed in his description, in relative clauses, of the sorrows of the Trojan war, that no main clause follows after the ἐπεί-protasis); a fivefold anaphora of ἐνθέα in 108–12; a combination of the *‘recusatio’ motif in 113–14, here in the form of a *rhetorical question (‘who could narrate all the sorrows?’) and the *‘(not) even + hyperbole’ motif in 115–16 (‘not even if you went on asking for five or six years how much the Greeks suffered’), which is concluded by ‘sooner you would return home bored’ (117).

The Troy veterans in the Odyssey typically look back on the war with grief, despite their victory; cf. Menelaus in 4.76–112n.; Odysseus in 8.83–92,
489–90, 521–31nn.; Achilles in 11.482–91 and 24.27nn.; and Agamemnon in 24.95–7n. (and cf. Demodocus in 8.81–2). Not only did the war itself bring many deaths, but for many the positive result is overshadowed by its aftermath (long or deadly nostoi).

109–12 Nestor inserts a *catalogue of fallen warriors, which works toward a climax: Ajax and Achilles each receive half a line, Patroclus one line, and his own son Antilochus two lines. The same four heroes will be mentioned together again in 11.467–70 and 24.15–18. The death of Antilochus will be commemorated again in 4.187–202; for his pre-eminence as runner and fighter, cf. Il. 15.570 and 23.756.

120–92 Nestor provides Telemachus (and the narratees) with information about *Odysseus. The *significant use of the dual in 128 underscores the salutary ‘one-mindedness’ of Nestor and Odysseus. His general references to Odysseus’ tricks before Troy serve as an appetizer for the stories of Helen and Menelaus, which will recount Odysseus’ incognito visit to Troy (4.239–64) and the ruse of the Wooden Horse (4.266–89).

122–5 Nestor likens Telemachus to Odysseus on account of his excellent manner of speaking; cf. 1.206–12n. Nestor’s compliment confirms the optimism of ‘Mentor’/Athena in 26–7, and fulfils her purpose in 78. He will pay Telemachus a second compliment in 199.

124–5 For Telemachus as a ‘youth behaving – unexpectedly – sensibly, cf. 2.324n.

130–85 The first part of Nestor’s report takes the form of a first-person narrative; he is recounting events which he witnessed himself. Whenever he speaks in the first person, it is in the plural (e.g., ‘after we had sacked . . .’), except for two places, where he stresses his individual fate as compared to that of others: 165–6, ‘I fled’ (versus Odysseus who returned to Agamemnon) and 184, ‘I came home’ (versus the fate of those of whom he does not know whether they returned or not).

Nestor’s *first-person narrative displays most of the characteristics of this type of narration. (i) Restriction of place: Nestor can only talk about events which took place in his own direct surroundings; this restriction causes the gaps in the stories about Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Odysseus, which will be filled in later (cf. 103–200n.). (iii) Restriction of understanding: Nestor partly has an exact understanding of the gods who interfered during the return of the Greeks (Zeus, executing Athena’s wrath; cf. 130–66n.), partly expresses himself in the typically vague terms of mortal speakers, according
to Jörgensen’s law † (θεός: 131, 173, 183 and *σαύμων: 166). Speaking after the events took place, he knows their outcome and repeatedly uses his ex eventu knowledge to insert ominous prolepses †: ‘then Zeus devised a sorry homecoming’ (132), ‘fool, who did not know that the goddess was not bound (*proleptic μέλλω) to listen’ (146), ‘Zeus was contriving pain of hardship’ (152), ‘Zeus was not yet devising a nostos for us’ (160), ‘since I saw that the god was devising evils’ (166). (iv) Subjective style: we find the following instances of character-language †: δὶς Ὡς, ‘sorrow’ (103; sixteen times in speech, once in simple narrator-text, but in the context of a pathetic simile: 8.529); καταθυτός, ‘mortal’ (114; nine times in speech, once in simple narrator-text: Ι. 5.901); νεώτερος, ‘younger’ (125; speech only, nineteen times); *κακός, ‘bad’ (134, 152, 161); ὅλος, ‘destructive’ (135; twenty-nine times in speech, six times in embedded focalization, four times in simple narrator-text); μοῦ, ‘without due thought’ (138; eight times in speech, once in simple narrator-text: Ι. 2.214); *πῆμα, ‘sorrow’ (152), *σχέτλιος, ‘hard-hearted’ (161).

130–66 The *wrath of Athena is alluded to vaguely (we only hear that it is caused by the fact that ‘not all of the Greeks were sensible and righteous’: 133–4) and its execution is left to Zeus (132, 152, 160). Zeus often is the one to carry out the wrath of other gods (cf. 9.551–5, in the case of Poseidon, and 12.260–425, in the case of Helius), but his dominant role here is meant to distract attention from Athena, who plays such a positive role in the main story.

137–52 A reported and abbreviated *‘assembly’ type-scene: (i) the people are summoned (137–9; assemblies are regularly held in the morning, but in the case of an emergency also in the evening, cf. Ι. 8.489ff., 9.10ff.; 18.245ff. The procedure this time is ‘not right’, because the people are ‘heavy with drinking’); (ii) the conveners proclaim their intentions, in indirect speech (140–9a; Nestor adds ex eventu commentary, which he backs up by a *gnomic utterance: ‘for the minds of the ever-living gods are not quickly turned’); (v) the people disperse (149b–150a); (iii) their sentiments are divided between the two speakers (150b–152).

184–7 For the opposition between ‘hearsay’ and ‘knowledge based on personal experience’, cf. 1.214–20n.

193–200 Nestor, assuming his addressees to be familiar with the *‘Oresteia’ story (cf. 193), recounts it allusively (Orestes is not named but referred to as ‘he’, κεῖνος: 197), in the form of a complex ring-composition †:
Like Athena in 1.298–305, Nestor uses the ‘Oresteia’ story as a hortatory paradigm for Telemachus. Whereas Athena had issued the exhortation in connection with the *kleos* which Telemachus can win by killing the Suitors (1.293–7), Nestor makes the general point that it is good for a man to have a son surviving him, but does not specify what Telemachus is to do; from the youth’s reaction, however, it appears that he himself immediately thinks of killing the Suitors.

199–200 For exhortations as endings of embedded narratives, cf. 7.297n.

201–52 Wedged in between Nestor’s two narratives, we find an intermediary exchange, which pertains to the issue of the revenge on the Suitors. We are dealing with an instance of the ‘interruption’ technique †: Nestor’s first narrative ended with a brief reference to the ‘Oresteia’ story (193–200); this subject is resumed after the interruption and now told in full (254–316). Because of the intermediary conversation, however, the narratees will listen to it with the Ithacan parallel fresh in their minds.4 Also, at the end of his second tale Nestor will return to the Suitors (313–16).

The train of thought in this exchange is not always easy to follow, but a possible analysis runs as follows:5

Telemachus Truly he [Orestes] made him [Aegisthus] pay and he will have *kleos* (202–4).

(‘catch-word’ technique †: κεῖνος ... ἐτίσατο picks up κεῖνος ἐτίσατο: 197)

(wish) If only the gods would grant me the power to take revenge on the Suitors, who plan outrageous deeds against me (205–7).

(despondent conclusion) But the gods did not give this blessedness to my father and me (208–9).

---

3 With von der Mühll and von Thiel, I read a full stop at the end of line 195.
5 Cook (1994).
Nestor  Since you bring up that question, they say that Suitors are planning evil against you (211–13).

(request for information) Do you allow yourself to be oppressed by the Suitors or are you forced to, because you lack the support of the people (214–15)?

(Without waiting for an answer, he comes up with a first solution) Who knows whether Odysseus will come back and take revenge (216–17).

(The mention of Odysseus here is triggered by Telemachus’ mention of ‘my father’ in 208–9)

(Second solution) If only Athena wanted to love you the way she took care of Odysseus before Troy.

(a double dramatic irony †: Nestor’s wish is in fact already reality, Athena is supporting Telemachus, and without realizing it he is talking about the goddess in her presence)

(Example from the past) For I never saw gods so openly loving as Athena openly helped Odysseus.

(this remark, though primarily backing up Nestor’s optimism that Telemachus may be helped by Athena, at the same time suggests that this goddess might help Odysseus to return)

If she were to love and take care of you that way, the Suitors would forget marriage (218–24).

(this scenario picks up Telemachus’ own wish of 205–7)

Telemachus  (Despondent rejection of both solutions) I do not think this (return of Odysseus and revenge by Odysseus or by myself) will happen, nor if I hoped for it nor even if the gods wanted it (226–8).

Athena  (Telemachus’ lack of faith in the gods is more than ‘Mentor’/Athena can bear and she intervenes in the conversation, though without revealing her divine identity) Telemachus, what are you saying now. A god, when wanting to do so, could easily save a man, even when he is afar (230–1).

(catch-word technique †: θεός... ἐθέλων picks up θεοὶ... ἐθέλοντας in 228)

I would prefer to come home safely after having suffered much
[like Odysseus] than come home and be killed, like Agamemnon (232–5).
(in other words, Telemachus must have some patience. Odysseus’ return is long, but safe)
Even the gods can not ward off death from man (236–8).

Telemachus (Cutting short the discussion) Mentor, let us no longer talk about these things. The gods have long ordained Odysseus’ death (240–2).
(for Telemachus’ view on Odysseus’ status, cf. 1.353–5n.; his present claim is rhetorical, to end the discussion)

(transition) Now I want to ask Nestor something else (243).
How exactly did Agamemnon die (244–52)?
(reminded by ‘Mentor’/Athena of Agamemnon in 234–5, Telemachus now returns to the ‘Oresteia’ story, with which Nestor had ended his first narrative: 193–8)

Broadly, this discussion shows the ‘announcement-denial-cutting short’ pattern (cf. 14.112–409n.): Nestor suggests that Odysseus may come back (first announcement) – Telemachus sighs that this is never going to happen (denial) – ‘Mentes’/Athena claims that Odysseus’ return is not unthinkable (second announcement) – Telemachus, still pessimistic, changes the subject (cutting short).

203–4 For the relation kleos and epic song, cf. 9.19–20n.

205–9 A *prolepsis of Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors, which takes the form of a despondent wish. As in 2.58–62, Telemachus declares himself physically unable to deal with the Suitors. His words display the typical swing between hope (205–7) and resignation (208–9); cf. 1.156–68. The narratees may note the dramatic irony †, when Telemachus, whom they constantly see supported by Athena, hopes for/despairs of divine support. Of course, Telemachus speaks in the strongest possible negative words about the Suitors: *ὑπερβασίν, ‘wrongdoing’, *ὑβρίζοντες, ‘behaving overbearingily’, and *ἀτάσθαλα, ‘outrageous deeds’; cf. 1.224–9n.

216–24 Once more, *Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors is anticipated, this time in the form of a hypothesis. The exact form is left open, but the possibility of Odysseus taking his revenge ‘singlehandedly’ (μονώμος) is mentioned; the first instance of the *‘one against many’ motif.

216–17 For this type of hopeful *rhetorical question, cf. 2.332–3; Il. 15.403–4; 16.860–1.
218–24 For the close relationship between Athena and Odysseus, cf. 1.26–95n.

231 The ease of divine actions and lifestyle is a commonplace in Homer; cf. 4.805; 5.122; 10.573; 14.349, 358; 16.198, 211; 23.186; Il. 3.281; 6.138; 10.556; 13.90; 15.356, 362; 16.690, 846; 17.178; 20.444.

232–5 Athena’s version of the *Oresteia* story contains two new details. The first is ‘at home’. Elsewhere in the Odyssey it is said that Agamemnon was killed at Aegisthus’ house (4.512–37; 11.410–11; 24.22). This deviation may be ascribed to Athena’s rhetoric: she wants to increase the contrast between ‘suffering a long time away from home’ (= Odysseus’ fate) and ‘coming back quickly, but being killed at home’ (= Agamemnon’s fate). The second new detail is Clytemnestra’s complicity in the murder of Agamemnon, which so far has been glossed over; the point will be worked out by Nestor in 254–316n.

243–6 As in 8.487–91 and 11.363–9, a request to continue narrating is preceded by praise of the narrator. It is a nice touch that Telemachus knows only from hearsay what the Iliadic narrator presents as fact (*Il.* 1.250–2), viz. that Nestor has been lord over three generations.

254–316 Whereas the ‘Oresteia’ story is normally told in the context of Agamemnon’s nostos, here it is integrated into Menelaus’ nostos:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Menelaus</th>
<th>Oresteia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>254–61</td>
<td>D If Menelaus had come home in time, he would have prevented Aegisthus’ funeral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>262–75</td>
<td>A While we fought before Troy, Aegisthus seduced Clytemnestra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>276–302</td>
<td>B Menelaus was detained on his way home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>303–11</td>
<td>C This allowed Aegisthus to kill Agamemnon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311–12</td>
<td>D’ Menelaus came too late to kill Aegisthus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This integration is the logical result of Telemachus’ questions in 248–52 (how did Aegisthus manage to kill Agamemnon, and where was Menelaus?), but above all it serves the ‘argument’ function † which the story has here: Nestor turns Menelaus’ case into a warning for Telemachus (‘don’t
stay away from home too long, like Menelaus did': 313–16). It appears from his questions that, contrary to Nestor’s assumption in 193–4, Telemachus has not yet heard in detail how Agamemnon died. In fact, Nestor has more to say about Menelaus than about Agamemnon’s death. For this Telemachus has to wait until Menelaus’ report in 4.512–49. For the piece-meal distribution of the ‘nostos’ stories, cf. Appendix C.

Nestor’s version of the *‘Oresteia’ story – the longest one – contains two novel elements. In the first place, there is the figure of Clytemnestra. So far, speakers recounting to Telemachus the ‘Oresteia’ story have played down her role in Agamemnon’s fall, presumably in order not to strain the already tense relationship between Telemachus and his mother (cf. 1.345–59n.). Not until 3.235 is Clytemnestra’s complicity in the murder mentioned. Here Nestor finally has her enter the story more prominently, but still presents her behaviour in the mildest terms possible: it was Aegisthus who started the affair (264; the – unique – periphrastic denomination † ‘Ἀγαμεμνονέτην άλοχον, ‘Agamemnon’s wife’, underscores his illegal behaviour), Clytemnestra resisted his advances for a long time, since she was a sensible woman (265–6), and it was divine fate which finally made her give in (269); the murder of Agamemnon is ascribed to Aegisthus alone (260, 303, 304, 308); in contrast to the double mention of Orestes killing Aegisthus (307–8, 309), there is only one reference to his burying his mother (309–10); the periphrastic denomination † ‘his hateful mother’ (310) is the closest we get to a possible reference to the matricide. Proteus, addressing Menelaus (Book 4), and Agamemnon, addressing Odysseus (Books 11 and 24), will speak of Clytemnestra in less restrained terms.

The second new detail is the figure of the singer-guardian, which we find in no version outside the Odyssey and which therefore looks like a Homeric ad hoc invention. He adds to the pathos of the story; despite Clytemnestra’s initial good sense and the protection of the singer, Aegisthus has his way. The singer’s position resembles that of Mentor in Odysseus’ palace (2.225–7), although the latter is responsible for the whole oikos, while the former is only responsible for Clytemnestra. The choice of a singer for this important task is in keeping with the Odyssean narrator’s tendency to promote his own profession whenever possible. For that same reason, he

---

makes sure that his colleague is absent when things start to derail at Agamemnon’s court.

Because this time the speaker is a war veteran, special attention is given to Aegisthus’ – despicable – non-participation in the war: cf. ‘at ease’ (263; in contrast to 262: ‘performing many trials’) and ‘unwarlike’ (310).

276–302 After recapitulating in 276–7 what he recounted in 157–79, Nestor continues Menelaus’ ‘nostos’ story: after Geraestus (on Euboea) comes Sounion (on Attica); here Menelaus has to stay behind because of the – natural – death of his steersman, whom he has to bury. A storm at Malea then drives half of his ships to Crete, and his own half to Egypt, where he remains for seven years. We will hear more about the stay in Egypt from Menelaus himself: 4.83–91, 351–586; cf. Appendix C.

Nestor does not indicate his source for this ‘nostos’ story (contrast 184–7); it is probably ‘hearsay’ or perhaps even already heroic song (cf. Phemius’ song on the nostos of the Greeks: 1.325–7).

286–300 This is the first in a series of ‘storm’ scenes: cf. 5.291–387; 9.67–73; 12.312–17, 403–25, and 14.301–15. Such scenes are built up out of a series of recurrent elements, which are assembled in Appendix D. Here we find the elements of place (Cape Malea), divine source (Zeus), wind, waves, and landing (doubled: in 291–9 on Crete and in 299–300 in Egypt).

293–6 The ‘there is a place X’ motif (περιττον τις) is an emphatic way of introducing a geographical description, used by narrator and characters alike, often at the start of a tale or subsection of a tale: cf. 4.844–6; 22.126–8; II. 2.811; 6.152; 11.711, 722; and 13.32. Variants are found in 4.354–7; 7.244; 9.116–18; 13.96–7; 15.403; and 19.172–3. The present tense in these descriptions is timeless or generic, which in the instances occurring in the narrator-text collapses the distance in time between the narrator and his story. The narrative is usually resumed with anaphorical ἐνθα, ‘there’ (cf. 297). We also find the ‘there was a person X’ motif (ηπεριφέρει τις): 9.508–10; 10.552–3; 15.417–18; 19.353; 20.287–8; and cf. the variant in 4.386–7; II. 5.9; 10.314; 13.663; 17.575. The motif is used here by Nestor to prepare for the crashing of the ships against this steep cliff in 298–9.

303–5 Nestor uses the device of *simultaneity, in order to stress the pathos of the situation, Menelaus being far away while at home Aegisthus was wreaking havoc.

8 Chantraine (1953: 191–2) and Bassett (1938: 87–8).
313–16 It is characteristic of Nestor, who recorded the speediest return from Troy, that he advises Telemachus to return home quickly, while Menelaus, who took the longest to get home, will invite the boy to stay with him for a while (4.587–92).

317–28 In sending Telemachus to Menelaus, Nestor unwittingly repeats Athena’s advice in 1.285–6; he uses the same argument (Menelaus is the last of the Greek generals to come home: 318), and adds a new one (Menelaus has travelled to very remote places: 319–22).

Nestor first suggests that Telemachus could travel with his ship (323) and then offers him a chariot and one of his sons as companion (324–6). Thus he offers Telemachus the escort to the next destination (πομπÆ, cf. πομπ∞ew: 325), which is typical of the *‘visit’ type-scene; cf. the Phaeacians’ escort of Odysseus (Introduction to 6), Telemachus/Penelope’s potential escort of ‘the beggar’/Odysseus (14.517 = 15.339; 19.313–16), and the Suitors’ potential ‘escort’ of ‘the beggar’/Odysseus (Introduction to 17).

329–95 The disguised Athena’s departure resembles that in 1.306–24: she announces her departure, is invited to stay, declines the invitation in natural terms, but leaves in supernatural fashion, to the amazement of her host. Again, she retains her disguise to the very last, elaborating on the difference in age between ‘himself’ and Telemachus’ companions (362), and introducing a fictional debt of the Cauconians to ‘him’ (366–8). This second departure is expanded to underline the importance of the moment; Athena is rounding off her mission as Telemachus’ ‘mentor’ and handing him over to mortal helpers.

Although Nestor had been addressing Telemachus, ‘Mentor’/Athena takes over, and carefully orchestrates her own departure and Telemachus’ further voyage. In her first speech (331–6) she praises Nestor’s storytelling (without responding to his offer of a chariot and companion of 324–6), proposes a libation before going to bed, and announces the return of Telemachus and herself to the ship. Here she must be calculating that hospitable Nestor will never let them go. Indeed, after the libation, when they are about to return to the ship he stops them apparently somewhat offended, and offers them lodgings for the night (346–55). His speech has a characterizing function (adding to the picture of *Nestor as the perfect host), and a structural function (preparing us for Telemachus’ later reluctance to pass by Nestor’s house a second time and be detained by him: 15.200–1), and also contains one last instance of dramatic irony †, when
Nestor exclaims ‘may Zeus and the gods avert this, that you would go back to your ship without being invited by me’, in front of Athena (who at least in part will realize his words by accepting his hospitality on behalf of Telemachus: 357–8). Now ‘Mentor’/Athena unfolds her plans (357–70): *Telemachus* is to accept the offer of lodgings, *he* will go to the ship and tell his companions about his trip to Menelaus (so Telemachus need not worry about them), and the next day will go to the Cauconians (this invention serves to prepare for her absence when Telemachus returns to his ship), while *Nestor* – and now she reverts to his earlier offer in 324–6 – is to provide Telemachus with a companion and a chariot.\(^9\) The scene ends with Athena’s epiphany (371–95; cf. 1.319–24n.): she leaves in the shape of a bird (371–2a; the use of ἐλευθερέων suggests a metamorphosis), thereby revealing her divine identity; the onlookers react with amazement (372b–373; the element is doubled here, Nestor being awarded a separate mention in preparation for his role as interpreter), and feel strengthened by this overt sign of divine support (374–85. The element is expanded into a speech; cf. *Il.* 13.66–75 and 76–81); when they return home, pious Nestor offers a libation to Athena (386–95).

329 The same description of a *sunset is found in 5.225. Athena refers to it in her speech (335).

332–42 An instance of the ‘collective libation’ type-scene; cf. 7.178–84; 13.49–62; 18.418–27; 21.263–73nn.; *Il.* 9.171–7; (mere mentions) 2.431–3; 3.40–64, 388–95; 7.137–8 and 15.147–53.\(^{10}\) Its elements are: (i) proposal to make a libation (332–4); (ii) approval (337); (iii) preparations (338–40); (iv) libation (341); and (v) closing formula (342). Libations are regularly made at moments of arrival or departure, before retiring to bed, and as part of a sacrifice.

375–85 Nestor (A) interprets the epiphany for Telemachus (375–9) and (B) then prays to Athena (380–4). *Ad* A, the old man sees his own wish of 218–24 fulfilled: Athena is supporting Telemachus, just as she supported his father before Troy. *Ad* B, a regular instance of the *‘prayer’ type-scene: (ii) invocation (380a), (iv) request (380b–381), (iii) promise of future service (382–4), and (v) positive response of the deity (385). At the same time, Nestor’s prayer functions as a *‘table of contents’ speech, in that it announces the sacrifice which will take up the next hundred lines.

\(^{9}\) Besslich (1966: 110–13).

\(^{10}\) Arend (1933: 76–8).
Nestor asks for *kleos for his whole family, presumably on account of their faultless hospitality and piety.

The customary *libation before retiring for the night is turned into a special occasion: Nestor mixes the wine himself, chooses costly old wine, and addresses the libation to Athena. The goddess has won the day, which began with libations in honour of Poseidon.

An instance of the ‘retiring for the night’ type-scene, which is found in two variants, (a) a simple one and (b) a more complex one, as part of a *‘visit’ type-scene. (a) First the others (go home and) retire, and then the central figure of the preceding scene (together with partner, if there is one); cf. 1.424–44; II. 1.606–11; 9.712–13; and 23.58–61. (b) First the others retire, then the guest, for whom a bed is prepared, and finally the host (together with partner); this is the variant found here; cf. 4.296–305; 14.455–533; II. 9.656–68; and 24.634–76 (and the split-up versions in 7.229–347 and 18.428nn.). It is typical of the homely atmosphere in Nestor’s palace that the old king puts Telemachus to bed himself. Making his son Pisistratus sleep next to Telemachus, Nestor indicates that this is the companion whom he offered in 325 and ‘Mentor’/Athena accepted in 369. The relative clause 401 can be analysed as Nestor’s implicit embedded focalization † (note the *‘sym pathetic’ dative ol): he chooses *Pisistratus because he is ‘still unmarried’.

The next morning, the same persons as the day before assemble, in the customary ‘reverse order’ †: first Nestor (405–12; cf. 402–3), then his sons (412–15; cf. 400–1), and finally Telemachus (416; cf. 397–9). The narrator inserts an external analepsis † on Nestor’s predecessor Nereus (408–12), which in its structure (before − already − then) resembles that on Nausithous in 6.4–12. As a result of this digression, the narrative pace slows down (retardation †), by way of preparation for the solemn and protracted ‘sacrifice’ scene to follow.

An instance of a catalogue, a series of entries, which may consist of proper names or several elements in a standard order, each of which may be elaborated; cf. 109–12 (≈ 11.467–70 ≈ 24.15–18); 8.111–19; 11.225–327, 568–634; 18.292–301; and 22.241–3. There are also ‘catalogue’ scenes, i.e., scenes which consist of a series of similar entries; the entries are often marked as such by refrain-composition †. Examples include the Apologue (cf.

---

12 Beye (1964) and Edwards (1980b).
Introduction to Odysseus’ meetings in the Underworld (cf. 11.51–225n.), the *Teichoskopia* (*Il. 3.146–244*), and the *Epipoleis* (*Il. 4.223–421*).

This catalogue (i) is another form of retardation (cf. previous note), and (ii) is designed to single out, once again, Telemachus’ companion *Pisistratus; he is mentioned last and awarded a line to himself.*

417–73 This is the most elaborate instance of the ‘sacrifice’ *type-scene* in Homer, not surprisingly found in connection with pious *Nestor; cf.*


417–36 Nestor gives orders, addition (cf. 14.413–19)
which are executed,
culminating in
436–8 the gilding of the horns. (unique) addition (announced in 384)
439–44a Bringing in of sacrificial utensils.

444b–447 (i) preliminaries and prayer typical (cf. 12.356–8; 14.420–4)
448–55 (ii) killing of victim expansion of simple ‘he/they slaughtered’ (cf.
12.359; 13.24–5; 14.74, 425–6; 17.180–1; 20.250–1)
456–60 (iii) preparation of sacrificial meat typical (cf. 12.360–4; 14.427–9)

460 (iv) burning of thigh bones, typical (cf. 3.9, 13.26a)
eating of entrails
462–3 (v) preparation of meat for meal typical (cf. 12.365; 14.75, 430–1)
471–3 (vi) meal typical (cf. 3.65–7; 12.397–8; 13.26b–27a; 14.109–11, 432–54)

It is typical of the intimate atmosphere in Nestor’s palace that all members of the family have some part in the sacrifice (cf. 439, 440, 442, 444, 448, 450–2, and 454).

464–9 An instance of the ‘bathing’ *type-scene*; cf. 4.48–51; 6.211–46;
(mere mention) 23.142–3.14 Its elements are (i) stepping into the bathtub (-);

(ii) washing (465–6a; Telemachus is here washed personally by one of Nestor’s daughters); (iii) anointing (466b); (iv) clothing (467); (v) stepping out of the bathtub (468a); resembling the gods (468b; an optional element); and (vi) sitting down (469. Telemachus takes the seat of honour next to his host Nestor; a significant seating arrangement).

The simultaneity of the bath taking place while the meat is being roasted (cf. the imperfect \( \omicron \nu \tau \omicron \nu \) in 463) is explicitly noted by the narrator.

474–85 Telemachus’ departure takes the form of a ‘departure by car’ type-scene; cf. 6.71–84; 15.143–83; \( \textit{Il.} \) 3.259–62; 5.364–6, 720–48; 8.41–6, 382–92; 14.23–30; 24.189–327; (mere mentions) 492–4 = 15.190–2. Its elements are (i) harnessing the animals (here split up into an order: 474–6 and an execution: 477–8); supplying the provisions (479–80; an addition. The unique detail that Telemachus is given cooked meat ‘such as kings whom the gods love feed on’ signals the progress in his development: he has been able to ascertain himself as the son of a king); (ii) mounting the chariot (481–3a); (iii) taking up the reins (483b); (iv) whipping up the animals (484a); (v) the animals move (484b–485).

486–97 After the detailed narration of the first half of the day, the rhythm accelerates sharply: the remainder of the day, the night, and the next day are described in a summary of a mere twelve lines.

\[ ^{15} \text{Arend (1933: 86–91) and Tsagarakis (1982: 88–94).} \]
Book 4 contains the evening of the fifth day and the sixth day, which bring Telemachus’ stay with Menelaus in Sparta (1–624; this will be followed by an epilogue in Book 15) and the reaction on Ithaca to Telemachus’ departure (625–848); cf. Appendix A.

The goal of Telemachus’ trip is attained in this book, in that he finally hears where his father is. This climactic moment is postponed until the very last moment, via a series of retardations †. In the first conversation between host and guest, Pisistratus broaches the subject of the reason for Telemachus’ visit (162–7), but this is ‘forgotten’ by Menelaus and only picked up the next morning, in the second conversation (312–31); an instance of the interruption technique †.¹ When Telemachus asks him for information about his father, Menelaus promises to tell him what the Old Man, Proteus, told him (347–50), but first embarks on a lengthy tale about his own Egyptian adventures. Not until halfway through this story does Proteus enter the story and announces that he will inform Menelaus about the fate of three Troy veterans (496–8), tells about Ajax and Agamemnon, but only after a reminder from Menelaus (551–3) finally discloses what he knows about the third man, Odysseus (555–60). Telemachus’ knowledge now almost equals that of the narratees, who have known from 1.13–15 on that Odysseus is with Calypso. They still know more than the youth, however, viz. that the gods have taken steps to ensure his father’s return. This is something of which Telemachus remains uninformed until the very moment he meets him; cf. 15.10–42n.

¹ Fenik (1974: 84).
The switch to Ithaca informs the narratees about the latest developments on the home front before they turn to the main hero.

1–624 The structure of Telemachus’ stay in Sparta is determined by the (overnight) *‘visit’* type-scene: (ii) arrival (1–2); (iii) situation found (3–19); (iv) reception (20–43); (vii) bath (48–51); (v) meal (52–68); (vi) conversation between host and guest (here doubled: 69–295 and 311–620); (viii) preparation of a bed for the guests (296–301); and (ix) the presentation of a guest-gift (in two moves: 587–619 and 15.92–134). This version of the ‘visit’ type-scene acquires its special flavour through the presence of Helen as hostess alongside the host Menelaus; cf. the hosting couple Alcinous and Arete. For a comparison between the visit to Menelaus and the visit to Nestor, cf. Introduction to 3.

The first part of Telemachus’ visit to Sparta resembles the first part of Odysseus’ stay with the Phaeacians: both admire the dwellings of their host, do not immediately reveal who they are, weep when Odysseus is mentioned, try to hide their tears, which are nevertheless noticed by their host, and finally are recognized/reveal themselves; cf. 43–75 and 69–167nn. Thus the episode is an anticipatory doublet †, which at the same time establishes a link between the experiences of father and son; cf. Introduction to 1.

3–19 The presentation of the situation which the arriving guests find (wedding festivities in the palace) is long and – for the benefit of the narratees – contains more information than the focalizers Telemachus and Pisistratus can conceivably know or see (an instance of paralepsis †): the names of the bridegroom of Menelaus’ daughter and the bride of his son, and certain facts from the past (Menelaus’ promise to Neoptolemus and Helen’s barrenness after the birth of Hermione).

As so often, the situation found has a symbolic or characterizing function (cf. 1.106–12n.): just as it is typical for pious Nestor to be found sacrificing, it is telling that Menelaus and Helen, famous for their (interrupted) marriage, should be involved in weddings. In contrast to the sacrifice at Pylos, the wedding plays no role in the ensuing scenes; the wedding meal (15) is seamlessly replaced by a guest meal (52–68; we do not hear what happens to the other guests, the relatives and neighbours of 3 and 16) and the bard (17–18) is replaced by Helen and Menelaus (219ff.). Yet the topic of marriage crops up every now and then (208 and 569), most conspicuously at the end of the episode, when Helen gives Telemachus a robe for his future wife to wear at their wedding (15.123–30).
The scene also contains a hint of what is to follow: amidst the description of the joyous festivities, the speaking name of Menelaus’ bastard son Megapenthes, ‘Great-Grief’, stands out. The name of a hero frequently is related to a characteristic of his father, and here the narratees get the first indication that underneath the glitter and glamour of the palace, much sorrow lies hidden.

6–7 For the motif of ‘the bride promised in return for war-service’, cf. II. 9.144–7 and 13.368.

20–43 The *reception of the guests is markedly different from that at Pylos: Telemachus and Pisistratus (a) wait at the entrance (20–2a); (b) are seen not by the host but by a servant (22b–23), who instead of leading them inside, first asks Menelaus whether they should be received at all (24–9); Menelaus angrily answers that of course the strangers must be entertained, seeing that he himself was entertained by others so often in the past (30–6); only then (c) does the servant hurry towards them (37–8); other servants unharness the horses (39–42n.); and (f) lead them in (43). The customary (e) words of welcome will be spoken in 59–64.

This is the first instance of the ‘rejected suggestion’ device: someone (usually a servant) makes a suggestion, which is rejected, but which nevertheless is important in that it (i) raises an issue which will be dealt with at a later point in the story, and/or (ii) triggers a reaction which characterizes a person. Other instances are found in 735–54; 15.304–46; 16.137–53, 304–20; 18.163–86; 19.476–502; 22.428–31, 480–501; and 24.386–411nn. The servant’s initial reluctance to receive the newcomers is not motivated (is it the remembrance of an earlier guest, Paris, who treated his master so badly? Or is it the marriage party going on?), but its effect is to bring out Menelaus’ hospitality and his preoccupation with the past, which is to play such a large role in the ensuing conversation. The scene also introduces the question of the strangers’ identity, when the servant remarks that ‘they look like the breed of great Zeus’ (27); cf. 69–167n.

The characterization † of Menelaus is implicit, except for one piece of explicit actorial characterization † (3.328b), which he shares with Nestor (3.20) and which is directly related to his function as Telemachus’ informant: he is ‘very sensible’. He is overzealously hospitable (he reacts with anger at a suggestion of his servant not to receive the guests: 31–6, ignores Telemachus’

---

2 Olson (1992a).
request not to keep him too long: 594–619, and counters the latter’s urgent request to return home with the suggestion that he first make a tour around Greece: 15.79–85), hesitant (twice he is anticipated in his actions by Helen: 117–37; 15.169–78), materialistic (although the acquisition of goods is fully accepted as a heroic activity, Menelaus seems preoccupied with it; he was away collecting riches when his brother was killed and, later, when the murder was avenged: 3.301–12, and suggests that Telemachus make a tour with him to collect gifts, whereas Nestor had urged the youth to hurry home), and weighed down by the past (his feelings of guilt about the exertions and death of so many Trojan comrades, all because of him, rob him of his sleep, appetite, and pleasure in his riches: 78–112. No wonder that this household uses drugs which make them oblivious to sorrow: 220–33).

25 The speech-introduction with *‘standing near’ suggests that the herald does not want everyone to hear his inhospitable suggestion.

31–2 An instance of the ‘you used to be sensible, but now you talk nonsense’ motif; cf. 18.215–20; 23.11–14; and II. 24.201–2. It serves to stress present folly, not past sense.

39–42 An instance of the *arrival by car* type-scene; cf. 6.88–91; 7.4–6 n.; II. 5.369, 776; 8.50, 433–5, 440–1; 13.35–8; and 24.576. It contains the following elements: (i) standing still (-); (ii) unharnessing (39); (iii) feeding and binding the animals (40–1); and (iv) storing the chariot (42). Only in this version do we find the realistic detail of the horses being sweaty.

43–75 The narrator’s – unique – qualification of Menelaus’ house as ‘divine’ (43a) forms the cue for Telemachus’ and Pisistratus’ admiring focalization of the palace (43b–47). Similar scenes are found in 5.63–75 (Hermes admiring Calypso’s surroundings) and 7.81–135 (Odysseus admiring Alcinous’ palace. The verbal repetition 45–6/7.84–5 underscores the link between the experiences of father and son; cf. 1–624n.). All three are examples of the Odyssean tendency to describe scenery through the eyes of a character. Only Telemachus also verbalizes his admiration (69–75); he mentions the ‘gleam’ of the precious metals (στεροπήν: 72 ≈ αἴγαλη: 45) but surpasses the narrator’s comparison (‘the radiance was like that of the sun or moon’) by saying that Menelaus’ palace resembles that of Zeus. His gawking signals to the narratees the limited experience of the young man who is travelling abroad for the first time.

48–51 An instance of the *‘bathing’ type-scene: (i) stepping into the
bathtub (48a); (ii) washing (48b–49a); (iii) anointing (49b); (iv) dressing (50); and (vi) sitting down (51).

51 The guests are given a seat of honour, next to the host; a significant seating arrangement.

52–68 An instance of the *festive meal* type-scene: (i) preparations (52–4); (ii) serving (55–8); Menelaus’ welcome speech (59–64n.) and offer of choice portion of meat (65–6n.); (iii) consumption (67); and (iv) conclusion (68).

59–64 Because of the unusual nature of the reception (cf. 20–43n.), Menelaus’ *welcome speech is found here and adapted to its new context: greeting (*χαίρετον*), invitation to eat (instead of a promise of a meal; cf. 14.80–108 and 443–5 and, in indirect speech, 10.373), and an announcement of the topic of the after-dinner conversation, which again (cf. 27) touches on the subject of the strangers’ identity (the narratees may note the particular aptness of Menelaus’ suggestion that they must be the sons of kings; cf. 69–167n.).

65–6 Menelaus gives his guests the chine, the choice portion; cf. 8.474–83; 14.437–41; and *Il.* 7.321–2. His honorific gesture is given extra weight by the fact that this portion was actually reserved for him.

69–295 The first conversation between host and guest touches on the question of the reason for Telemachus’ visit (Odysseus in the present), but this subject is then dropped until the second conversation; cf. Introduction. Instead, it deals mainly with Odysseus in the past. It falls into three parts: in the first part (69–189) sad words are spoken about Odysseus; in a transitional part (190–218) tears are banished; the third part (219–95) is then filled with admiring stories about Odysseus. Note the typical use of *κείνος* to refer to absent Odysseus: 145, 149, 152, 157, 182.

The conversation consists of eleven speeches, divided over four speakers (Telemachus, Pisistratus, Menelaus, Helen), with Menelaus taking the most turns (five), Pisistratus playing a central role, and shy Telemachus only whispering at the beginning and speaking once at the end. He is mainly spoken about, by means of the device of ‘indirect dialogue’ †; cf. *oíde*: 138, 235; *ódde*: 143, 157; *δ*: 153; *oí*: 163, 166; *Τηλεμάχῳ*: 166, 215.

69–167 The meal having ended, one expects the *identification of the guest ritual to follow, especially after Menelaus’ explicit announcement in 60–4. Instead the narrator opts for the *delayed recognition’ story-pattern*:

---

following up his earlier admiring focalization of Menelaus’ palace, Telemachus voices to Pisistratus his awe at its splendour. Though he whispers (cf. 1.156–7n.), the youth’s words are overheard by Menelaus, who reacts with a sad relativization of his riches, which culminates in a long recollection of Odysseus (the typical element of (i) the host spontaneously starting to talk about what is dear to the unrecognized guest). This triggers Telemachus’ tears, which, despite his effort to hide them, are noticed by Menelaus, who is beginning to guess who he is, but first wants to check his guess (the typical element of (ii) the test). Before he can speak out, Helen enters and immediately suggests that this must be the son of ‘that man’ (Odysseus). Menelaus agrees (note the ‘catch-word’ technique †: his κείνου picks up Helen’s κεῖνος) and their hypothesis is confirmed by Pisistratus, speaking on behalf of Telemachus (again ‘catch-word’ technique: his κείνου echoes Menelaus’ κείνου). This is not followed by (iv) a literal anagnorisis, because hosts and guest have never seen each other before. The use of the ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern is actorially motivated † through Telemachus’ youthful shyness, which prevents him from addressing Menelaus right away (cf. 158–60), narratorialy motivated † by the narrator’s desire to foreshadow the pattern of Odysseus’ identification on Scheria; cf. 1–624n. It also makes Helen and Menelaus spontaneously note Telemachus’ resemblance to Odysseus (141–6 and 149–50), which is important for the youth, who feels so uncertain about his own identity.

69–75 For whispering, cf. 1.156–7n. It is without effect here (Menelaus overhears Telemachus’ words all the same), but prepares for 158–60, where Pisistratus says that Telemachus is too shy to address Menelaus right away.

76–112 Like most Troy veterans, Menelaus feels only sadness when he looks back on the Trojan war and its aftermath; cf. 3.103–17n. In his case grief is mingled with guilt, in that he is only too aware that the other Greeks exerted themselves because of him (104–7; cf. 170 and Il. 3.99–100).

His speech displays no formal structure, but moves forward largely by association: ‘With Zeus no mortal could vie (‘catch-word’ technique †: Menelaus’ Ζηνι picks up Telemachus’ Ζηνός in 74), because his house and possessions are immortal. Of mortals, someone could vie with me in possessions, or not (the disjunctive form of his claim signals for the first time Menelaus’ indifference towards his riches). I collected them after suffering a great deal and wandering a great deal. On my wanderings I came to . . . (catalogue of countries). While I wandered around, collecting these riches,
another man killed my brother. Therefore I cannot enjoy these possessions
(with τοῖσδε he makes a gesture). You probably have heard from your
fathers, whoever they are, of these things, since I suffered a great deal and lost
many of my possessions. I would be happy with only one-third of them [pos-
sessions], if those who died before Troy were still alive (impossible wish). But
(instead) weeping over all, I sometimes enjoy myself, sometimes stop doing
so (sad reality). Over all I do not weep so much as over one, because no Greek
tooled so hard for me as Odysseus (the name follows climactically, at the end of
a summary priamel †). I am sure Laertes, Penelope, and Telemachus weep
over him’.

The verb *δεύρομαι in 100, 104, and 110 suggests the name Odysseus.

78–81 An instance of the *‘no other could vie with X in . . .’ motif. Underlying
Menelaus’ modesty here is the notion that it is dangerous for
mortals to challenge the gods; cf. 8.223–8n.

81–2 These lines recall Odysseus’ fate (cf. especially 16.205–6) and
thereby suggest the parallel between this hero and Menelaus; cf. 351–586n.

83–9 The catalogue of the exotic countries which Menelaus has visited
(83–5a) and the specimen of a traveller’s tale (85b–89; cf. Odysseus on the
Laestrygonians in 10.82–6) serve as appetizers for the long Egyptian tale to
follow in 351–586.

87–9 The *‘description by negation’ technique, which here takes the
form of a priamel (‘no king or shepherd lacks cheese, meat, or milk, but the
sheep always provide them with milk’), points up the miraculous, indeed
paradisiacal circumstances of the Libyans.

91–2 A brief but highly emotional reference to the *‘Oresteia’ story.
Menelaus uses no names but only periphrastic denominations † which give
expression to his pain and disgust: ‘my brother’ (Agamemnon), ‘another’
(Aegisthus), and ‘his accursed wife’ (Clytemnestra). The deceitful nature of
the murder is indicated thrice, the asyndeton adding weight: ‘secretly, by
surprise, through treachery’. Telemachus by now (cf. 3.254–312) knows
enough of the story to be able to understand these references, while at the
same time their brevity turns them into appetizers for Menelaus’ full story
in 512–47.

104–12 A host spontaneously starting to talk about what concerns the
unrecognized guest most, or about that guest himself, is a form of dramatic
irony † which is typical of the *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern; cf.
1.158–77; 8.73–82; 14.37–47; 16.31–5; 19.124–61, 361–81; and
20.185–240nn.\textsuperscript{6} In the present case we find a combination: Menelaus starts talking about Odysseus and ends by mentioning Telemachus himself.

112 The *‘left behind’ motif adds to the effect of ‘this newborn baby’ now standing in front of him. The motif recurs in 144–6.

113–16 Menelaus’ hypothesis (110: που) that Telemachus is weeping over his father becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy; after his earlier detachment in 1.215–20, Telemachus now sheds tears. Using the periphrastic denomination † ‘father’ for Odysseus in 113 and 114, the narrator underscores the emotional tone of this passage.

113–54 A split variant of the *‘action-perception-reaction’ pattern: (action) Telemachus weeps (113–16a) – (perception) this is noted by Menelaus (116b) – who, after Helen’s intervention, (reaction) describes (to her) what he has seen (153–4).

117–37 Menelaus deliberates, but before he can come to a decision Helen enters and takes the initiative. The same pattern is found in 15.169–78, which characterizes *Menelaus.

117–20 There are two types of ‘deliberation’ scenes in Homer: indirect ones (s/he pondered how/whether . . .) and direct ones (deliberative *monologues). The direct ones are used when the deliberator is alone (and hence can speak aloud), indirect ones when he is in the presence of another person (and his thoughts have to remain unspoken). Not surprisingly, most ‘deliberation’ scenes in the Odyssey concern *Odysseus; they show him exercising his characteristic foresight, caution, and restraint.

Within the group of *indirect deliberation’ scenes,\textsuperscript{7} we may distinguish between the ‘how’ form and the ‘whether’ form. In the ‘how’ form the deliberator knows his goal, but ponders over the best means of reaching it; cf. 9.316–18, 420–4; 11.229–30; 15.169–70, 202–4; and 20.28–30. The regular capping formula is ‘this seemed to him/me the best solution’. This form is often found at the beginning of an episode or book. In the ‘whether’ form the deliberator considers which course of action to follow, X or Y; here, and cf. 4.789–90; 6.141–7; 9.299–306; 10.49–54, 151–5; 17.235–8; 18.90–4; 20.10–13; 22.333–9; 23.85–7; and 24.235–40. The regular capping formula is ‘then, in the division of his/my mind this way seemed most profitable to him/me’. Usually the first alternative is the instinctive, emotional


one, the second the rational one, which is eventually chosen. In the *Odyssey* it is not unusual for a character to reach no decision at all; the ‘indirect deliberation’ scene only serves to portray his/her inner turmoil.

Here Menelaus hasn’t decided whether to let Telemachus mention his father himself and thereby reveal himself (the emotional alternative), or whether he should first test him, i.e., test his own hypothesis that the youth is Telemachus (the rational alternative). Tests are a regular element of the *delayed recognition* story-pattern; cf. especially (in connection with indirect deliberations) 23.86–7 and 24.235–8.

121–36 The narrator gives Helen an emphatic entrance on the stage: she is made to enter separately from Menelaus, and the pace of narration slows down (retardation †); her attributes are summed up, one is described in detail, and her servants are mentioned by name.

The characterization † of Helen\(^8\) is largely implicit: she is hospitable (she considerately mixes a drug into the after-dinner wine: 219–32, and provides Telemachus with a guest-gift: 15.126), quick-witted (she immediately recognizes Telemachus: 138–46, as she had previously recognized Odysseus: 250–1; she immediately interprets an omen at the moment of Telemachus’ departure: 15.171–8), and virtuous (her spinning attributes, 125–35, portray her as a Homeric housewife; cf. Arete in 6.305–7, but a very majestic one, in that they are of silver and gold. The comparison to a goddess (122), which signals her divine beauty (cf. 17.37n.), is adapted to the context: she is compared to ‘Artemis of the golden distaff’. The guest-gift which she gives Telemachus is a piece of clothing she made with her own hands). Typical of Helen, however, is her explicit self-characterization: she shows repentance for what she did, leaving her family for Paris (259–64, cf. *II*. 3.173–6; 6.345–8; 24.764), and guilt because of the trouble and sorrows she caused others (145–6; cf. *II*. 3.127–8; 6.355–6), and hence heaps reproach on herself (145; cf. *II*. 3.180, 242; 6.344) and tries to excuse herself (239–46). As in the *Iliad*, no hard words are spoken in her presence; but there is criticism in her absence (by Odysseus in 11.438, Eumaeus in 14.68–9, and Penelope in 23.224; cf. Hera in *II*. 2.161–2 and Achilles in *II*. 19.325) and veiled criticism in her presence (by Menelaus in 266–89). Together with Clytemnestra, Helen also functions as a foil to Penelope; cf. 11.409–56n.

---

125–34 A dynamic description † of an object: an external analepsis † recounts how Helen got it. The description takes the form of an epic regression †:

C Phylo brought a basket (125a),
B which Alcandra, wife of Polybus, had given to Helen (125b–127).
A Polybus had given gifts to Menelaus (128–9),
B' while his wife Alcandra had given a distaff and basket to Helen (130–2).
C' Phylo brought the basket to Helen (133–5).

The mention of Egypt once again (cf. 83–9) whets the narratees’ appetite for the Egyptian tale to follow. Soon the narratees will hear of another Egyptian gift presented to Helen (220–32).

137–46 The contents of Helen’s opening speech, her identification of Telemachus, comes as a surprise, in that the narrator had not recorded her perception of the youth; an instance of *emancipation of speech.

*Helen’s quick recognition of Telemachus prefigures her recognition of Odysseus in her Trojan tale (250–1) and is characteristic of her. Her impulsiveness contrasts with Menelaus’ caution in 117–19; she is not afraid to risk being mistaken (cf. Nestor in II. 10.534).

141–6 Helen notes, in general, *Telemachus’ resemblance to Odysseus in outward appearance.

144 Coming from Helen’s mouth, the *‘left behind’ motif adds to her feelings of guilt; Odysseus had to leave his newborn baby because of her.

148–54 Menelaus notes, in particular, *‘Telemachus’ resemblance to Odysseus’, his feet, hands, the look in his eyes, his head and hair. Next, he inserts a brief mirror-story †: 151–4 recount, for the benefit of Helen, who at that point was absent, what the narrator told in 100–16 (cf. esp. the echo of ἐνοχὴσεν: 106, 107; and 154 = 115).

156–67 Speaking on behalf of Telemachus (cf. 69–295n.), Pisistratus confirms the identification of Telemachus, excuses the youth’s failure to mention his name, explains his own identity and role, and gives an indication of the reason for Telemachus’ trip. When he says that Telemachus has come to see whether Menelaus will ‘promise him a word or deed’, i.e., as his next words suggest, will help him deal with his troubles at home, this is not
entirely correct (Telemachus himself will give the correct reason for his visit in 316–31), but neither is it illogical (cf. 2.326–7).

168–82 In his answer Menelaus picks up the subject of ‘the father’ (Odysseus) rather than ‘the son’ (Telemachus, looking for information about his father). This is an instance of the ‘distraction’ device: of the two points mentioned by speaker A, speaker B deals only with one, so as to make the other – temporarily – disappear into the background; cf. 465–7; 7.240–97 nn. Here it camouflages the interruption in the discussion of Telemachus’ mission; cf. 69–295 n. Menelaus gives expression to his affection for Odysseus (and his feelings of guilt) by describing, in contrary-to-fact style, how he would have rewarded him, if he had come home. At the end of his speech he returns to reality, with line 182 giving a summary of Odysseus’ predicament, which recalls the words of the narrator in 1.11–15: a god has made ‘that unhappy man (*δυστηγος) alone of all Greeks without anostos’.

183–202 Menelaus’ grief is infectious. The ‘all’ in 183 is worked out in two anaphoric clauses (κλαει μεν... κλαει δε), followed by a third clause, in which the same idea is expressed in a litotes (even X’s eyes did not remain tearless). For the phenomenon of people weeping simultaneously over different persons, cf. Il. 19.301–2, 338–9; and 24.509–12. The scene explains the need, later on, for Helen’s drug, which makes people forget their sorrows.

In this scene *Pisistratus is allowed to overstep the limits of his role as Telemachus’ companion and to demand our attention in his own right. Once again (cf. Introduction to 1) the fates of the Greek heroes who fought before Troy are compared: having first heard about a son who suffers because his father is away (Telemachus: Odysseus, 164–7), we now turn to a father who is blessed with excellent sons (Nestor: Pisistratus and Antilochus), while at the same time we may recall that we see before us a father whose son symbolizes his unhappiness (Menelaus: Megapenthes).

187–9 A passage of embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘he remembered ...’) indicates beforehand – part of – the contents of the ensuing speech; cf. 1.29–31 n. Knowing that Pisistratus is thinking of Antilochus, the narratees are waiting for the moment when he mentions him, which in fact will be at the very end of his speech.

190–202 The transition to the second part of the conversation (cf. 69–295 n.) comes about as follows:

Menelaus’ suggestion to resume dinner (213–14), which comes as something of a surprise after the formulaic line 68 signalling the end of a meal (and cf. Pisistratus’ μεταδῶρπιος), flows forth from his desire to raise their spirits, and makes it possible for Helen to put a drug in the wine.  

For the motif of ‘a young person behaving unexpectedly sensibly’, cf. 3.124–5n.

As usual in Homer, the narrator dutifully describes the execution of an order or suggestion made in speech, here in reverse order †: Menelaus’ servant Asphalion pours water over their hands (cf. 213b–214a) and they eat (cf. 213a).

The *X thought of something else’ motif marks a new and unexpected turn in the story: after Pisistratus’ and Menelaus’ repeated references to the next morning (194 and 214), one would have expected the company to retire to bed; instead, Helen undertakes an action which allows for continuation of the conversation.

Helen’s drug. For once in the Odyssey forgetfulness is seen in a positive light; usually it forms the negative counterpart to ‘remembering’ (cf. 1.57n.). But then this is only a ‘temporary’ (223) forgetfulness, not the dangerous permanent forgetfulness of, say, the Lotus-Eaters. In principle, all those crying in 183–6 need this drug (even Telemachus, who will hear
tales celebrating his father’s cleverness, might become emotional, as is Odysseus himself in Book 8), but it seems that Helen and Menelaus, who are still in the grip of their past, need them most.

234–89 The Trojan tales of Helen and Menelaus are closely connected. Both feature Helen and Odysseus, they follow each other in time, and have a parallel structure:

Helen
I will tell a suitable story (239).
I could not tell of all Odysseus’ feats
but here is an illustrative deed (240–3).
(242 = 271)
Odysseus incognito entered Troy,
I [Helen] recognized and questioned him,
Odysseus revealed the plan of the Greeks
[the stratagem of the Wooden Horse],
and returned after having killed many Trojans (244–58),
which pleased me, because I wanted to return home (259–64).

Menelaus
You told a proper story (266).
I have seen much, but never the likes of Odysseus,
what a deed he did (267–71).
Greeks entered Troy hidden in the Wooden Horse,
you [Helen] addressed them,
but, pressed by Odysseus,
they did not react (272–88).

The tales have two ‘argument’ functions †: (i) they are laudatory reminiscences of *Odysseus (which illustrate his characteristic wiliness and ability to endure and restrain himself; cf. τολασίφρονος: 241, 270, ἔταλη: 242, 271) told for the benefit of Telemachus, and (ii) Helen’s tale is also intended at exculpating herself (she kindly received Odysseus, rejoiced over the fact that he killed many Trojans, felt remorse for her decision to leave home), while Menelaus’ tale is incriminating (nowhere does he openly criticize Helen, but the juxtaposition † of the two tales and their parallel structure invite the narratees to take the one as a correction of the other. Because, during his incognito stay in Troy, Odysseus revealed the stratagem of the Wooden Horse to Helen, she was able to mount her treacherous/stupid attack on them inside the Horse. Her calling out to the Greeks had almost

---

‘brought the Trojans glory’, viz. had they discovered the stratagem and killed the Greeks inside). Another indication that underneath the smooth surface of the tales old battles are being fought out is the ‘you’ form of Menelaus’ tale. Second-person narration11 is a rare phenomenon (cf. 24.37–92; II. 15.18–30; 20.188–94; and 21.441–57), employed for special effects: here Menelaus confronts Helen with an episode in her life which she would rather forget.

The stories also have a ‘key’ function †: to anticipate elements of the second half of the Odyssey, when Odysseus will enter ‘hostile’ territory in the guise of a beggar (Books 17–21), be recognized by a woman who washes him (Euryclea in Book 19), forcefully silence a person (Euryclea in Book 19), and be questioned/addressed by name by a woman (Penelope in Book 19). They also prepare for the particular form of Odysseus’ return: he will not include Penelope in his revenge scheme or reveal to her his plan (to kill the Suitors) beforehand (the model provided by Helen’s tale), but, forcefully restraining himself when she calls out to him, he will retain his disguise until after he has killed the Suitors (the model of Menelaus’ tale). Indeed, the example of Helen, who either stupidly or treacherously abuses her knowledge of the stratagem and calls out the name of the men inside, implicitly motivates for the narratees Athena’s and Odysseus’ decision to leave Penelope out of the revenge scheme; cf. Introduction to 19. This is one of the places where Helen acts as a foil to Penelope; cf. 11.409–56n.

The gods play an important role in the two tales. Helen looks back on her leaving home as an act of ἔθη, ‘delusion’, which she ascribes to Aphrodite (261); cf. II. 6.349, 357. Her view that the gods led her is shared by other characters: 17.118–19; 23.222–4; and II. 3.164. Though ascribing a person’s mistakes to the gods does not remove that person’s responsibility, the argument is often adduced as ‘extenuating circumstance’ in apologies or excuses. Helen’s arrival at the scene of the Wooden Horse is, tentatively (¶melle12 da¤mvn (275) and thereby to some extent excused. Her departure is ascribed to Athena (289), because this goddess could be expected to support an act of cleverness, especially one coming from Odysseus.

240–3 As usual, an embedded narrative is preceded by an *emotional preamble, which here takes the form of the *recusatio motif: a speaker announces that he will/can not tell all;13 cf. 3.113–14; 7.241–3; 11.328–9,

517–20; Il. 2.488–93; 17.260–1; and the closely related *‘aporia’ motif. The motif has an expressive function, indicating the mass of narrative material. It usually takes the form of a summary priamel † (‘I will not tell all, but only this’), once (3.113–14) of a *rhetorical question (‘who could tell all?’).

259–64 The authenticity of Helen’s remorse in the past, while she was still in Troy, is confirmed by the *Iliad (cf. 121–36n.), but her present-day position (in Sparta, in the presence of Menelaus) appears from her reference to Troy with κεῖσε (‘thither’) and her stress on her excellent husband (263–4).

266 Characters often give a reaction to long embedded narratives: they confirm the truth of a tale (Menelaus here; Alcinous in 11.363–9), or, conversely, say they do not believe it (Eumaeus in 14.363–89), or indicate that they see through its special nature (Eumaeus in 14.508–9), and/or indicate that they have been moved by it (Eumaeus in 14.361–2; ‘the stranger’/Odysseus in 15.486–7; and cf. Penelope’s tears in 19.203–9).

271–89 This is the first time the story of the *Wooden Horse is told in the *Odyssey; cf. 8.499–520 and 11.523–32nn. (and the allusion in 22.230).14 The story is told by three different speakers (Menelaus, Demodocus, and Odysseus), who choose different perspectives (twice the perspective of the Greeks inside the Horse, once of the Trojans looking at it from the outside), and relate different phases (Odysseus’ coolheadedness at the moment of Helen’s ‘inspection’ of the Horse, the Trojans’ decision to haul the Horse into their city and their subsequent defeat by the men inside, and Neoptolemus’ bravery when the Greeks enter the Horse). This is, of course, because they have different addressees (Telemachus and Helen, Phaeacians and unrecognized Odysseus, Achilles). The one recurrent element is Odysseus’ central role, as inventor of the stratagem and leader of the men inside. The Wooden Horse is a typical example of the Odyssean *‘cunning versus force’ theme.

277 ‘Three’ is a typical number †; cf. 4.86; 8.340; 9.65, 361; 12.105.

285–7 The *‘all the others, but X (alone)’ motif singles out Anticleus, who is otherwise not mentioned in Homer. He has a speaking name (‘Anti-Glory’. Had he spoken, the Greeks would have been detected and killed and the glory of the victory would have gone to the Trojans; cf. 275), which may also direct the narratees’ attention to Euryclea (cf. 234–89n.); cf. Cleopatra—Patroclus in the Meleager story of *Iliad 9.

290–5 Helen’s drug has not been completely successful, in that Telemachus does not forget his grief about his father: ‘(hearing such laudatory tales about Odysseus) is only all the more sorrowful, for these things (his capacity to endure, as displayed in these stories) did not ward off his destruction (an instance of the ‘his X (special quality) did not save him’ motif, cf. *Il.* 2.871–5 and 6.13–17), not even if he had an iron heart (the *(not) even + hyperbole’ motif)*.

296–305 An instance of the *retiring for the night* type-scene: first the guests (for whom a bed is prepared: 296–301a ≈ *Il.* 7.335–40 ≈ *Il.* 24.643–8) and then the hosts.

306–10 According to the ‘reverse order’ principle †, the last to go to bed is the first to rise. Menelaus is given a regular *dressing* scene.

311–620 This scene brings the fulfilment of what was announced in 214–15: an ‘after-dawn’ conversation between Menelaus and Telemachus, the second one during the latter’s visit to Sparta. Helen and Pisistratus have faded into the background (from which they will surface again in Book 15). Its structure is as follows:

| Menelaus | A | What is the reason for your visit (312–14)? |
| Telemachus | A’ | I have come to ask you about Odysseus (316–17). |
| | B | My *oikos* is being ruined by Suitors (318–21). |
| | A’ | Therefore I want to ask you about Odysseus (322–31). |
| Menelaus | B’ | I hope Odysseus will come back and kill the Suitors (333–46). |
| | *(transition)* I will tell you what I know about your father (347–50). |
| | A” | Egyptian tale (351–586). |

(For the last part of the conversation, cf. 587–619n.)

Though Pisistratus had already touched upon the reason for Telemachus’ visit in the first conversation, Menelaus opens this conversation by again inquiring about it; it is now Telemachus who explains his case (more accurately than Pisistratus; cf. 156–67n.).

312 Menelaus is the first character to address Telemachus as ἦρως, ‘hero’ (cf. the narrator at 21 and 303); Nestor was still calling him τέκνον, ‘child’. The narratees may note *Telemachus*’ progress towards maturity.

316–31 Telemachus uses the same words as when he asked Nestor to tell him about Odysseus (322–31 = 3.92–101), but backs up his request with another argument: not Odysseus’ plight but the destructive presence of the
Suitors. This change may be due on the one hand to the narrator’s wish for variation (narratorial motivation †), on the other hand to Telemachus’ rhetorical strategy (actorial motivation †); he can expect the materialistic argument of the loss of goods to appeal to *Menelaus.

333–46 Menelaus’ combined prediction (333–40) and wish (341–6) is one of many *prolepses of Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors.

333–40 Menelaus’ prediction takes the form of a simile; cf. Il. 1.234–9 (Achilles: ‘just as the staff I hold will never sprout leaves again, so my oath will be fulfilled’). The Odyssey contains 136 similes † and comparisons (69 in narrator-text, 67 in speech), the Iliad 346, of which 46 in speech; this shows that the Odyssey has fewer comparisons/similes, which occur relatively more often in speeches. The simile is triggered by the Suitors’ qualification as ἐνάλκιδες, ‘unwarlike’ (334): deer typify cowardice and defenceless timidity; cf. Il. 1.1225; 4.243–5; 11.113–19; 13.102–4 (note ἐνάλκιδες); 21.29; and 22.1. The verbal correspondences between simile and context are manifold: the wish of the Suitors/doe ‘to sleep/put their young to sleep’ (ἐνηνήσασα/ἐνήνησασα) in ‘the bed/lair’ (ἐνήνη/ἐνηνηνη) of a ‘powerful’ (κρατεροφρόνος/κρατεροφρόνο) man/lion, who ‘will send/has sent a shameful fate’ (ἀεικέα πότμον ἐφήσει/ἐφήσε/ἐφήσει) upon them.

Odysseus will be compared to a lion four more times; cf. 6.130–6; 17.126–31 (a repetition of the present passage as part of Telemachus’ report to his mother); 22.401–6; and 23.45–8.15 With the exception of the simile of Book 6, this series forms a thematic unity: the similes of Books 4 and 17 anticipate, those of Books 22 and 23 cap Odysseus’ bloody revenge on the Suitors.

341–6 A *nostalgic wish (‘if Odysseus could be such as he was when . . . Then . . .’), which here – uniquely – takes the form of a prayer (341). Odysseus’ reputation as a wrestler is confirmed by Il. 23.708–39 and his own claim in 8.206.

347–50 The transitional passage, in which Menelaus promises Telemachus to tell him what ‘the Old Man from the Sea’ said about Odysseus, creates a tension which will only be resolved some 200 lines later (554–60); for this retardation †, cf. Introduction.

351–586 Menelaus’ Egyptian tale.16 The narrator has Menelaus start the

story of his _nostos_ from the point where Nestor left off (‘the gods still held me in Egypt’; cf. ‘the wind drove Menelaus towards Egypt, where he wandered around, assembling goods’: 3.299–302), according to the technique of ‘piecemeal presentation’; cf. Appendix C. Also, he stops his story at the exact point where Nestor had previously covered it (3.306–12), leaving out that of the two alternatives mentioned by Proteus in 544–7 the second became reality: he came home after Orestes had killed Aegisthus, on the day of the latter’s burial. Apart from the technique of ‘piecemeal’ presentation, embarrassment on Menelaus’ part may have played a role here. The information which Menelaus received from Proteus three years ago is in fact tailored to the present situation (Menelaus addressing Telemachus): the story of Ajax’ _nostos_ did not feature in Nestor’s report in 3.102–200; Menelaus’ version of the ‘Oresteia’ story provides Telemachus with the details of Agamemnon’s death which he had asked Nestor for (but did not receive) in 3.248–52; and the information about Odysseus is as much an answer to Menelaus’ question at the time (551–3) as to Telemachus’ now (317, 322–31).

Menelaus’ _nostos_, of all Greek _nostoi_, comes closest to that of Odysseus (cf. Introduction to 1): he too wandered around for many years, was driven off course by a storm, detained on an island (cf. Calypso), suffered from starvation (cf. Thrinacia), was advised by a supernatural woman (cf. Circe) to consult a clairvoyant person, who tells him about the fate of his comrades, his journey home, and the end of his life (cf. Tiresias); cf. also 81–2, 363–425, 561–9; and 10.135–468n.

Menelaus’ tale is a *first-person* narrative, but his narrative style actually comes close to that of the narrator: making use of his _ex eventu_ knowledge, he becomes almost omniscient (in 351–2 he immediately reveals the reason for his delay, the omission of a sacrifice, which at the time he did not know and did not find out until 472–4; in 365 he mentions the name of Proteus, which he does not hear until 385; in 365–6 he reveals that the woman who helped him was a goddess named Eidothea, whereas in 376 he does not yet know who she is, since she only identifies herself in 385–6, and then without mentioning her name. This name may be part of Menelaus’ ‘mythological’ knowledge; cf. Odysseus’ knowledge in the _Apologue_, Introduction to 9); he lavishly quotes speeches (twelve in all, which together take up 120 lines; the *‘speech within a speech’_ device; he records every daybreak and nightfall (429, 431, 574, 576); inserts an abbreviated *depar-
tured by ship’ type-scene, uses *verbatim* repetition (373–4 = 466–7, 379–81 = 468–71, 426–31 = 571–6), and hardly any character-language (for the only examples, cf. 441–4n.).

His narrative consists of five parts, which display a ring-composition †:

A  Menelaus’ plight on the island of Pharos (351–62)
B  Conversation with Eidothea (363–425)
C  Capture of Proteus (426–59)
B’ Conversation with Proteus (460–570)
A’ Resolution of Menelaus’ plight (571–86)

(note the verbal echoes: ἔρεξα τελησσας ἐκατόμμβας, 582 = οὖ . . . ἔρεξα τελησσας ἐκατόμμβας, 352; διδοσαν . . . οὗρον ἀθάνατοι, τοῖ . . . ἔπεμψαν, 585–6 = ἔχον θεοί, οὔδε . . . οὗροι . . . φαίνονθ’ . . ., οἶ . . . Πομπής γίγνονται, 360–2)

354–9 After the general ‘Egypt’ in 351, Menelaus emphatically zooms in on the scene of the subsequent events through the *‘there is a place X’* motif.

363–425 Menelaus’ encounter with Eidothea is a special variant of the *‘stranger meets with local inhabitant’* story-pattern: the stranger Menelaus meets the local inhabitant Eidothea, daughter of the Egyptian sea god Proteus, who does not so much escort him to the palace as tell him how to come into contact with her father. There is a close similarity to the meeting between Odysseus and Hermes in 10.275–309: on both occasions a god prepares a mortal for an upcoming encounter with a god and predicts in detail what his divine adversary will do and how he can counteract it.

363–4 The pathetic device of the ‘if not’-situation † adds weight to Eidothea’s intervention.

370–425 The conversation between Menelaus and Eidothea displays the following structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eidothea</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Are you just a fool (<em>νήπιος</em>) or do you linger on Pharos <em>willingly</em> (371–4)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Menelaus</td>
<td>A’</td>
<td>I stay here not <em>willingly</em> (376–8). (“catch-word” technique †: οὖ το ἐκῶν κατερύκομαι picks up ἐκῶν . . . ἔρύκεαι in 372–3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eidothea</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Tell me which god is hindering me and how I can <em>return</em> (379–81)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eidothea</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>If you are able to get hold of Proteus through an <em>ambush</em> (383–8),</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
he will tell you how you can return (389–90),
and what has happened in your home during your absence (391–3).

Menelaus C’ Tell me how to ambush Proteus (395–7).

Eidothea C” Instructions to ambush Proteus (399–434).

370 The speech-introduction with *standing near’ suggests affection on Eidothea’s part (cf. 364, 366).

379 Menelaus touches on the point of divine omniscience: both narrator and characters state or imply that the gods, especially the Muses and Sirens, know all; cf. 465, 468; 12.189–91; and Il. 2.485. Indeed, gods often know things they have not been informed of; cf. 5.21–7, 202–13, 286–90nn. Occasionally, however, when this is more effective, gods are not omniscient, e.g., Thetis in Il. 18.73–7.17

384–7 Eidothea emphatically introduces her father through a variant of the *there was a person X’ motif.

399–424 Eidothea’s speech combines description in the present tense (400–6), with prior narration in the future tense (407–8a, 411–13, 417–18), with instructions, which are typically in the form of imperatival infinitives (408–10; 414–16, 419–24); the same combination occurs in 12.37–141n.

426–570 The execution of Eidothea’s instructions is described in full detail, with a number of additions and variations:

426–33a Menelaus apprehensively returns to his men and awaits a new day.
(this preamble adds tension; cf. 10.309)

433b–434 He chooses three companions. Cf. 408b–409

435–9 Eidothea provides four sealskins. New detail

440 Eidothea makes Menelaus and his companions lie down ‘in order’ and covers them with the sealskins. Cf. 407–8a New detail

441–7 The Greeks are almost overwhelmed by the stench of the sealskins. Variation of 406 (stench of living seals)

448–9 Seals come out of the sea and lie on the beach. Cf. 404–5

The conversation between Menelaus and Proteus brings much more than the answer to Menelaus’ question about how to get home; cf. Odysseus, who hears much more from Tiresias in 11.100–37. Inspired by Eidothea’s remark of 391–3, Menelaus takes the opportunity to ask Proteus about the fate of the companions whom he and Nestor left behind in Troy (486–90) and receives a long answer (492–569).


441–4 The pathos of this – variant of an – ‘if not’-situation † is heightened by a *rhetorical question (443) and two instances of emotional character-language †: *αἰνότατος, ‘most terrible’ (441), and ὀλοκληρωτατος, ‘most devastating’ (442; twice in direct speech).

465–7 Menelaus employs the *distraction’ device: of the two questions asked by Proteus (‘which god advised you so that you could ambush me’ and ‘what do you need’), he answers only the second; in this way he avoids the painful revelation that it was his own daughter who ‘betrayed’ her father. He camouflages his distraction by invoking Proteus’ *divine omniscience.

492–569 Proteus’ long answer consists of an emotional preamble (492–8), followed by sections on Ajax (499–511), Agamemnon (512–49) – after a reminder (550–4; cf. Introduction) – Odysseus (555–60), and Menelaus himself (561–9). As a god and man ‘who knows the depths of the whole sea’ Proteus is an omniscient narrator: he knows the exact identity of

---

the gods involved in the action (cf. 500, 505, and 513); he can recount Ajax’
drowning at sea, an event which no one else witnessed; he alone knows
where Odysseus is, indeed has seen him himself on his faraway island; and
he knows the future (Menelaus’ after-life).

492–8 In his *emotional preamble Proteus varies the usual ‘it is painful
for me to relate X’, by saying that Menelaus will not like to hear what he has
to say (492–4), and selects his topics via a summary priamel † (many died
and many were left over, but of the leaders only two died during their nostos
and one is still detained somewhere’).

499–511 Proteus’ information on Ajax contains the longest reference to
Athena’s wrath; cf. 1.325–7n. Her role (cf. 502) is overshadowed by
Poseidon, who is the one who actually causes Ajax’s death. This god’s
actions provide a taste of what is to follow in the next book, his near drown-
ing of Odysseus. The manner of Ajax’s death (he provokes the god by claim-
ing that he has escaped from his element ‘against the will of the gods’) comes
close to the ‘mortal challenges immortal and dies’ motif, for which cf.
8.223–8n.

502–3 Whereas the pathetic device of the ‘if not’-situation † usually
describes how a hero is saved in the nick of time, here it describes how at the
last moment he ruins himself.

512–49 Proteus’ version of the *Oresteia* story, though recounted to
Menelaus, is in fact clearly tailored to its present addressee Telemachus (cf.
351–586n.): it gives a detailed description of the murder itself (after Nestor
has filled in the prehistory and aftermath); strictly speaking, his tale, which
does not mention Aegisthus’ liaison with Clytemnestra, must have struck
its original addressee Menelaus as oddly unmotivated. This version con-
tains two new elements in comparison with earlier ones: Aegisthus collects
twenty men and sets an ambush for Agamemnon (530–1; this detail occurs
only here) and Agamemnon is killed during a banquet (531, 535; cf. 11.411,
415, 419–20). These elements point to the story’s ‘key’ functions †: to adum-
brate (i) the Suitors’ ambush against Telemachus (658–74n.; note especially
the verbal echo 530: 778) and (ii) Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors, which
will take place during a meal (cf. 1.106–12n.). The tale is rather convoluted
as regards its locations. As the text stands, it yields the following sequence:
Agamemnon manages to escape from the dangers of the sea, but then is
blown off course at Cape Malea in the direction of Aegisthus’ estate, for the
moment escapes from his enemy when the gods blow him homewards after
all, and joyously steps ashore; this is noticed by a watchman, who reports it
to Aegisthus, who comes to him (on the beach), invites him to his own
palace, and kills him there.

514  Being blown off course at Cape Malea is a traditional motif; cf.
3.286–90 (Menelaus); 9.79–81 (Odysseus); and 19.186–7 (Odysseus in a
lying tale).

522  For the gesture of kissing the ground, cf. 5.462–3n.

525  The epithet δολόμητις, ‘wily’, which in the Odyssey is given only to
Aegisthus (here; 1.300; 3.198, 250, and 308) and Clytemnestra (11.422),
belongs to the character-language †: all instances (eight) are found in direct
speech.

555–60  An effective use of the *speech within a speech’ device, in that
Telemachus hears the crucial information about his father, as it were, from
Proteus himself. The information is three years old, but it is relevant to note
that Proteus refers to the situation of Odysseus staying against his will with
*Calypso in the present tense (558), which suggests that it is still the same, at
the moment of Menelaus’ speaking (as the narratees know is indeed the
case; cf. 1.13–15 and 48–59). A new element for the narratees is that
Odysseus has no ship; it is this problem which has to be solved first, when we
turn to him.

561–9  Like Odysseus in 11.134–7, Menelaus receives information about
his death, or rather non-death. This is an external prolepsis †, in that
Menelaus’ death will take place after the time limits of the main story. The
Isle of the Blessed resembles Olympus, as described in 6.42–6 (with the gods
being replaced by men). The paradise-like quality of Elysium is evoked in
566 by the *‘description by negation’ technique (‘there is no snow, no bitter
cold, and no rain’). The use of the present tense indicates the eternal nature
of the place; cf. 6.41–7n. As ῥήσιτη, ‘most easy’, suggests, the mortals who
end up here will be living the proverbial ‘easy life’ of the gods (cf. 3.231n.).

571–86  Menelaus executes Proteus’ orders in 472–80 (cf. esp. 581–2 ≈
477–8), of his own accord erecting a cenotaph for Agamemnon (584).

577–80  An abbreviated *‘departure by ship’ type-scene: (iii) the ship is
drawn to the sea; (iv) made ready for the voyage; (vii) the crew goes on
board; and (ix) starts rowing.

584  For the relation between a grave mound and kleos, cf. 9.19–20n.

587–619  Telemachus’ mission has been accomplished, and nothing
would be more natural for him than to return home again; indeed, Nestor
urged him to return quickly (cf. 3.313–16). The narrator needs to ‘park’ him in Sparta, however, because he wants to bring Odysseus to Ithaca first and only then have father and son meet. He accomplishes his goal by making the conversation end in the following way:

Menelaus  A  Stay in my palace for another eleven or twelve days (587–9a).
B  Then I will give you an escort and guest-gifts: a chariot, horses, and a goblet, which will make you remember me (589b–92).

Telmachus  A’  Don’t keep me with you for a long time. I would like to stay with you, but my companions are waiting for me in Pylos. So you can keep me with you only for some time (594–59).
B’  Let your guest-gift be a precious object instead of horses and a chariot (600–8).

Menelaus  C  You are of good blood, to judge from what you say.
(once more, *Telmachus’ resemblance to Odysseus is noted)
B”  Of the precious objects in my palace, I will give you a crater (611–19).
(‘catch-word’ technique †: κείμηλια picks up κείμηλιον in 600)

The parallel order † in which Telemachus reacts to Menelaus’ two propositions allows his refusal to stay long to disappear into the background and to be completely superseded by the question of the guest-gift. In the end, Telemachus will remain in Sparta for twenty-nine days; cf. Introduction to 15.

591–2  An instance of the *‘guest will remember his host at home’ motif.

595–8  An instance of the ‘*(not) even + hyperbole’ motif (‘I could even stay a year with you, so much do I enjoy your stories’); cf. 3.115–17; 4.293; 5.73–4, 484–5; 8.195–6, 280–1; 11.356–61, 375–6; 12.77–8, 87–8, 106–7; 13.86–7, 291–2, 312–13, 389–91; 14.196–8; 20.49–51; 22.60–7; 23.184–8; and II. 2.489–90. The motif is used mainly by characters, once (II. 2.489–90) by the narrator speaking in pro pria persona. Telemachus uses it here out of courtesy, softening his refusal to stay long.

602–8  This is the first in a series of three descriptions of Ithaca; cf. 9.21–7 (Odysseus) and 13.242–7nn. (Athena).19 The passages share a number of elements: Ithaca is rugged (9.27; 13.242 and cf. 10.417, 463), not flat (4.605, 607; 13.243), suitable for goats (4.606; 13.242), not for horses (4.606–7;

In each case the speaker also places his/her own accents, in keeping with the situation and the addressee. Here Telemachus, using the ‘description by negation’ technique, explains his refusal to accept Menelaus’ guest-gift (horses and chariot) by stressing the contrast between Sparta, which has broad plains full of plants, and Ithaca, which, like all islands, has no broad roads and no meadows.

609 Smiles in Homer express affection (here; 5.180; 13.287; 23.111), encouragement (22.371), or superiority (16.476; 20.301–2). Whereas laughter can be ironical, smiles always reflect a character’s true feelings.

611 Once more, *Telemachus’ resemblance to Odysseus is noted.

620–7 The narrator – uniquely – accomplishes the change of scene †, from Sparta to Ithaca, in two movements: first he takes leave of Menelaus and Telemachus by means of an appositive summary † (620) and then switches to Spartan guests, who come to Menelaus’ palace; then he takes leave of these Spartan guests, again in the form of an appositive summary (624), and switches to the Suitors in Odysseus’ palace. In this way an effect of ‘zooming out’ is created. For another instance of ‘zooming out’, cf. 13.81–92n.21 Both changes of scene are abrupt, which in the second case has the effect of underscoring the contrast between the Spartan guests (who bring their own food) and the Suitors (who amuse themselves at Odysseus’ expense). Just as the Spartan episode started with a meal, it ends with one. The ring-composition † effects closure; cf. Introduction to 24.

After line 624 the narrator drops the ‘Telemachus’ storyline until 15.1, turning briefly to the ‘Ithaca’ storyline, the Suitors and Penelope (625–857), and then for a long time to the ‘Odysseus’ storyline; cf. Appendix B. He leaves the ‘Telemachus’ storyline in an open state: Telemachus has just declared that he does not want to stay too long with Menelaus (594–9). During Telemachus’ absence from the stage – for the duration of ten books – the narratees are occasionally reminded of him (5.18–20, 25–7; 13.413–28; and 14.174–84).

625–847 This passage forms the counterpart of the two scenes 2.298–336 and 2.337–81: there we had the reactions of the Suitors and Euryclea (taking Penelope’s place) to Telemachus’ announcement that he is leaving, here of the Suitors and Penelope to the news of his actual departure. The Suitors decide to set up an ambush against Telemachus, which means that

---

when we finally turn to Odysseus (in 5.1), his return home has become even more urgent.

The passage consists of a succession of small scenes, the narrator switching between the Suitors and Penelope in an instance of small-scale ‘interlace’ technique †:

625–74 The Suitors hear of Telemachus’ departure and plan an ambush.
675–767 Penelope reacts with despair to Telemachus’ departure and the Suitors’ plan.
768–86 The Suitors prepare their departure.
787–841 Penelope is assured about Telemachus by ‘Iphthime’/Athena.
842–7 The Suitors depart and take up their position.

The effects of the ‘interlace’ technique † are to (i) create an illusion of *simultaneity; (ii) bring out the depravity of the Suitors through the contrast with Penelope (juxtaposition †); and (iii) make clear the ineffectiveness of the Suitors’ ambush: for a moment Penelope – and the narratees – are frightened by it, but even before it is set into motion, they are given divine assurance that Telemachus will come home safely; cf. 658–74n.

625–57 Noemon and the Suitors. The Homeric ‘continuity of time’ principle † ordains that the time which has passed for Telemachus on his trip (four days) has passed for the Suitors, too. The narrator therefore has to motivate why they find out about Telemachus’ departure (i) now and (ii) not sooner. For (i) he brings on stage Noemon, the man who lent Telemachus his ship (2.386–7), and makes him disclose casually – and innocently – Telemachus’ departure. The triviality of Noemon’s case (he needs his ship back to transport some mules) contrasts with the shattering effect his words have on the Suitors. A motivation for (ii) is given in 638–40: (although the Suitors had apparently noticed Telemachus’ absence from the palace,) they never thought that he had gone actually to Pylos, but rather that he was in the fields or with Eumaeus. Their misinterpretation has been carefully prepared for by the scepticism which they demonstrated concerning Telemachus’ voyage in 2.255–6 and 323–36 (recalled in 663–4).

625–7 The narrator expresses his disapproval of the Suitors both implicitly, stressing that the house they find themselves in is Odysseus’ (cf.

1.103–4n.) and that they are amusing themselves ‘exactly where they did before’ (cf. 17.169n.), and explicitly in the form of a *narratorial intervention, qualifying them as ‘wanton’ (*ὑπριν ἔχοντες).

638–72 The Suitors’ embedded focalization † (638–40, shifter: ‘they did not think . . .’) contains their unspoken thought (cf. 16.448n.): in his speech to Noemon (641–7) Antinous nowhere refers to his surprise at Telemachus’ departure; only after Noemon has gone away does he speak his mind (663–72).

640 This is the first time the swineherd *Eumaeus is mentioned in the *Odyssey*. This character is often referred to by his ‘title’, the swineherd, rather than his name; cf., e.g., 13.404, 14.22, 33, 48, 121.

641–57 Antinous asks three questions, which are answered in reverse order † by Noemon:

| Antinous | B’ | which young men followed him, Ithacan aristocrats or his own servants (642b–644)? |
| Noemon | C’ | I gave it voluntarily. | B’ | Ithacan aristocrats followed him. I also saw Mentor, or was it a god, who resembled him, joining them (652–644), |
| | | ‘catch-word’ technique †: ἐκὼν . . . δῶκα picks up ἐκὼν . . . δῶκας in 647 | | which is strange, because I saw him yesterday here on Ithaca, while then (a vague answer to Antinous’ when) he went on board with them to Pylos (655–6). |

649–56 Noemon’s perception of the real Mentor the day before has not been recorded by the narrator; the sudden introduction of this piece of information is therefore an effective instance of *emancipation of speech. It is not uncommon for Homeric characters to see through divine disguises on the spot (because of something special in the behaviour of the god dressed as a mortal); cf. 1.96–324n. Here Noemon – uniquely – in retrospect guesses that ‘Mentor’ was perhaps a god (the narratees know that it was Athena: 2.399–401). Simple Noemon leaves it at this, but Antinous and Eurymachus
should have paid attention to this information and considered the possibility that Telemachus was helped by a god. It is indicative of their blindness that they do not, and instead start plotting the death of Telemachus.

658–74 This is the first in a series of three private conferences by the Suitors, which demonstrate their steady decline in power and effectiveness (cf. 17.360–506n.): here they meet with their first setback, in that Telemachus has pursued his plan to go to Pylos and Sparta, to which they react with an ambush against the youth; in 16.342–408, after this ambush has failed, one of them suggests a new plan to kill Telemachus, which is, however, postponed; in 20.240–7 they give up their plans to kill Telemachus, under the influence of a ‘bird’ omen.

For the first time the Suitors start to take the youth seriously: they interrupt their entertainment and decide to lay an ambush for him. The idea of a violent attack on Telemachus has been anticipated in 1.251 and 2.367–8. The ambush, of which the narratees are reminded from time to time (13.425–8, 14.180–2, 15.28–32), will in the end remain without effect: warned by Athena in 15.28–32, Telemachus will escape the attention of the Suitors; cf. 15.301–495n. From the very beginning the narratees and certain characters (Odysseus and Telemachus) are assured of its ineffectiveness; cf. 767, 825–9; 5.25–7; 13.427–8; and 15.31–2. Other characters, who lack this reassurance, take it seriously: Athena in 5.18–20 (for rhetorical purposes), Penelope in 703–34, and Eumaeus in 14.180–2. The functions of this abortive ambush are (i) to create suspense (cf. 15.28–32, 295–300nn.) and (ii) to add to the vilification of the ‘bad guys’, the Suitors; this is one of their many crimes.

663–72 Antinous’ speech shows us clearly the perverted perspective of the Suitors: Telemachus has undertaken his trip ‘insolently’ (663; the root ἴππερφαίλ- is used in the Odyssey mainly of the Suitors themselves, cf. 1.134n.), his initiative in procuring a ship and crew is an ‘evil’ (667), and it is to be hoped that Zeus will destroy the boy’s life (667–8; the narratees, knowing that Telemachus’ mission was in fact divinely ordained: 1.93–5, may note the dramatic irony †).

675–767 After her brief action in Book 1, this scene paints a more detailed portrait of Penelope, as queen (722–6, she praises Odysseus’ qualities as king), wife (724–6), and above all loving mother. Her motherly anxieties prepare for her relief at Telemachus’ safe return in 17.36–60.

---

The scene can be analysed as an instance of an epic regression †:

C Penelope did not remain uninformed about the Suitors’ plans for long (675–6).
B For the herald Medon informed her about it (677a),
A who had overheard their counselling (677b–678).
B’ He reported the plans to her (679–715).
C’ Penelope, knowing about them, expressed her fear to her servants (716–67).

675–715 This is the first of five scenes featuring the herald Medon; cf. 16.412; 17.172–7; 22.357–80; and 24.439–50. Though he is the herald of the Suitors (681 and 17.172–3) and regarded by Telemachus as being in the enemy camp (16.252), he supports Odysseus’ family: he twice leaks secret information to Penelope (here and 16.412), and once defends the divine justice of Odysseus’ revenge (24.439–50). In 22.357–8 it appears that he took care of Telemachus when he was young. He is spared during the slaughter of the Suitors (22.371–80). His position is comparable to that of *Phemius, and he is often mentioned in one breath with him.

675–8 The change of scene †, from the Suitors to Penelope, is effected through a variant on the ‘line of perception’ device: Penelope does not hear the Suitors herself, but is told about them by Medon. Medon’s overhearing of the Suitors is only now recounted by the narrator; we are dealing with a completing internal analepsis †.

680–95 Penelope accosts Medon while he is stepping over the threshold (cf. 17.575–8) and herself hypothesizes the reason for his visit. Her spontaneous outburst adds to the effect of what Medon has to tell her; things are even worse than she thought (697–9). She addresses him and begins to speak about the Suitors in the third person, but from 686 onwards angrily apostrophizes the absent Suitors. She accuses them of ungrateful behaviour: they return the goodness of king Odysseus with shameful deeds, viz. the destruction of Telemachus’ goods. In 16.424–32 she will again use this type of reasoning, then in connection with Antinous’ personal debt to Odysseus.

687–95 For the topic of ‘Odysseus the good king’, cf. 2.229–34n.

703–10 Penelope, hearing about Telemachus’ trip and the ambush, reacts as vehemently as Antilochus when he hears about Patroclus’ death (704–5 = Il. 17.695–6). Her two questions (‘why did my son have to go?"
Was it so that even his name would not be left among the people?’) are *rhetorical questions; they give expression to her despair.

712–13 Occasionally mortal speakers do not know whether to ascribe an action to a divine or a human cause; cf. 7.263; 9.339; 14.178–9; and 16.356. In most cases the narratees know the right answer (as here). In the present instance the suggestion that Telemachus’ trip has a divine origin is made by Medon in an attempt to comfort Penelope.

716–19 Grieving, Penelope seats herself on the *threshold, the typical place of the weak. The narrator contributes to the pathos of the scene by using character-language †: θυμοφόρος, ‘heartbreaking’ (only here in narrator-text versus four instances in speech).

719–58 The dialogue between Penelope and her servants, especially Euryclea, has a parallel structure †:

Penelope (emotional preamble) Zeus has given me the most sorrows of all: first he took away my husband and now my son has disappeared (722–8).

A Hard-hearted women, why did no one tell me when Telemachus went away, so I could have tried to stop him (729–34)?

B But let us now warn Laertes and see whether he can complain to the people about those who long to destroy his and Odysseus’ race (735–41).

Euryclea A’ I had to swear to Telemachus not to tell you about his departure (743–9).

B’ Pray to Athena and leave Laertes alone. For I do not think that the gods hate the race of the Arcesiads (750–7).

724–6 Penelope’s opinion on Odysseus is wavering, like that of most of his philoi (cf. 1.158–68n.): here and in 1.343–4 (?); 2.96; 19.141, 257–8, 313 she says that he is dead, whereas in 832–4 she expresses hope that he is perhaps still alive. Instead of his name she uses a proud, three-line periphrastic denomination † to refer to her husband.

735–54 As in 16.137–53, a suggestion about informing *Laertes is made, only to be rejected again. This instance of the *‘rejected suggestion’ device serves mainly to keep the narratees’ memory of this character alive until his final entrance in Book 24.

For the significance of πολυδένδρεον, ‘with many trees’, cf. 23.139n.

735–7 This Dolius, servant of Penelope and keeper of her estate, is the same person as the loyal servant who figures in Book 24 (222–5, 386–412,
and 496–9). He might be the father of Melanthius (17.212; 22.159) and Melantho (18.322), in which case we would have another example of a ‘good’ parent and a ‘bad’ child; cf. Aegyptius in 2.15–23. But we may also be dealing with two different persons, the name Dolius (from δολιος) apparently being a common slave name.25

750–67 Penelope will similarly be advised to pray after Telemachus comes back safely (17.48–60). There the prayer is merely summarized in indirect speech (17.50–1), here it is quoted in full (761–7). It is a regular instance of the *‘prayer’ type-scene: (i) speech-introduction containing verb of praying (761b); (ii) invocation of deity (762); (iii) claim to favour, here on the basis of past services of Odysseus (instead of the speaker herself) (763–4); (iv) request (765–6); (v) speech-capping, consisting of verb of praying (767a; Penelope not only prays, but raises a religious outcry, which the Suitors will overhear) and the deity’s positive response (767b; Athena’s acceptance of Penelope’s prayer is the first sign for the narratees that Telemachus will come home safely; cf. 658–74n.).

768–86 The narrator briefly switches to the Suitors, to reveal not only the next phase in their plan to ambush Telemachus, but above all their misapprehension of the situation. The change of scene † is accomplished through a variation on the ‘line of perception’ device: the Suitors, having apparently heard Penelope’s shout, now react to it. Their collective reaction takes the form of an *actual tis-speech:26 they interpret the shouts of the queen as a sign that she is preparing for marriage, unaware of their plans to ambush Telemachus. At this point the narrator intervenes and, ironically echoing the Suitors’ own words (οὐ... ἵσυν... ἐτέυκτο = οὐδὲ... οἴδεν... τέτυκται), unmarks their ignorance, in the form of the ‘they said A, but did not know how things really were’ motif (cf. 22.31–3n.). Antinous’ speech, in which he exhorts his fellow Suitors to ‘keep clear of overbearing talk, lest someone reports it inside the palace’ (773–7), continues the depiction of their ignorance; they do not know that Medon has already revealed their plan to Penelope.

772 This is one of the rare instances of narratorial intervention, i.e., where the narrator explicitly presents his judgement; cf. 1.1–10n. These interventions may take the form of a comment (here; 2.156; 13.170; 22.31–3; 23.152), a prolepsis † (20.390–4; 21.98–100, 418; 24.470–1), a *rhetorical question (22.12–14), or a negative qualification (1.8; 2.324 = 4.769 = 17.482

The number of narratorial interventions in the *Odyssey* is larger than in the *Iliad*, and they are concerned almost exclusively with the Suitors. They form part of the narrator’s strategy of vilifying the Suitors; cf. 1.224–9n.

778–86 A *‘departure by ship’* type-scene is begun: (i) selection of crew (778); (ii) crew goes to the ship (779); (iii) the ship is drawn to sea (780); and (iv) made ready for the voyage (781–3); (vi) equipment is put on board (784); and (v) the ship is moored (785a). Then the scene is interrupted, to be continued in 842–3.

787–841 While the Suitors wait for night to fall (for night-time seatravel, cf. 2.357n.), the narrator once more switches to Penelope (cf. 625–847n.), to depict her anxiety (787–94), which will induce Athena to send her a comforting dream (795–841). The final words of the scene (‘in the middle of the night’) cue our return to the Suitors.

787–90 The change of scene † is accomplished through a variant of ‘correspondence of action’: the carefree Suitors are having a meal, while worried Penelope fasts.

Penelope’s anxiety is first painted in embedded focalization † (789–90; shifter ‘she pondered . . .’). It triggers a *‘sympathetic’* dative (οἱ), a periphrastic denomination † (‘her handsome son’), and character-language † (*Íperf¤alow, ‘overbearing’). There follows an *‘indirect deliberation’* scene (789–94), in the ‘whether’ form, which does not end in a decision but is used to describe Penelope’s inner turmoil (thereby showing the need for the upcoming comforting dream). Her feelings are further worked out in a ‘lion’ simile (791–3), the only one given to a woman in the Homeric epics. The primary function of the simile †, to illustrate her anxious pondering, is ‘advertised’: μερμηριξε≈ὁρμαίνουσαν. The lion, who sees himself surrounded by a ‘treacherous circle’ of hunters, also suggests how she feels cornered by the Suitors and their ambush against Telemachus.

795–841 Dreams27 in Homer are of two kinds: the ‘action’ form, in which the dreamer dreams about some symbolic action in which s/he is involved (cf. 19.536–50; 20.83–90nn.; and *Il.* 22.199–200) and the ‘visit’ form, in which the dreamer is visited by someone and addressed in his/her sleep (cf. 6.1–51; 15.1–47; 20.30–57nn.; *Il.* 2.1–35; 23.62–108; 24.677–89).

---

The second form has developed into a ‘dream’ type-scene, containing the following elements: (i) indication of night or a person sleeping (cf. 793–4); the nocturnal visitor (ii) sets out (795–801; here she is sent by Athena); (iii) arrives (802); (iv) finds the person sought (-); (v) stands near the head of the dreamer (803); (vi) speaks (804–37; here a conversation ensues); and (vii) leaves (838–9); (viii) the dreamer awakes and reacts to the dream (840–1; when Penelope rejoices upon waking, it is clear that the dream has had the effect intended by Athena). Within the group of ‘visit’ dreams we can further distinguish between ‘monologue’ dreams (the majority) and ‘dialogue’ dreams (here and II. 23.62–107). The first type sets off a new development in the plot, while the second occurs as an episode within a narrative sequence which is already under way; in the first type the nocturnal visitor incites the dreaming character to action, while in the second type s/he reacts to the mental state of the dreamer. As a rule, the visitor is a god in mortal disguise; here Athena sends a phantom in mortal disguise (for which phenomenon, cf. II. 5.449–53). The ‘personality’ of the visitor is always that of a person dear to or trusted by the dreamer, so as to increase the effectiveness of the message.

The structure of the dialogue is as follows:

‘Iphthime’ A (first exhortation) You need not worry (804–5a).
B The gods want your son to come back (805b–806).

Penelope A’ Sister, why did you come and exhort me to stop worrying (810–13).
C I have first lost my husband (814–16)
(this remark prepares for her question 831–4)
B’ and now my son has gone. I fear for him, because bad men are planning
to kill him upon his return (817–23).

‘Iphthime’ A’ (second exhortation) Have courage (825).
B’ He will be assisted by Athena (826–9).

Penelope C’ Can you also tell me something about him [Odysseus] (831–4)?
(note the typical *κεινον)

‘Iphthime’ C” I do not know whether he lives or has died and it is bad to tell worthless
things (836–7).
(as often, a speech ends with a *gnomic utterance)

The ‘dialogue’ form shows Penelope broaching a subject not foreseen by Athena, viz. Odysseus, only to be left uninformed about him; thus it alerts
the narratees to the fact that Penelope will remain unaware of Odysseus’ return; cf. Introduction to 19.

795 The *“X thought of something else’ motif marks a new development in the story, which has not been prepared for in any way.

800–1 *Athena’s embedded focalization informs the narratees.

804–7 A variant of the ‘dream’ speech (cf. 6.25–40n.): dreamers are usually reproached for sleeping while action is required; here Penelope is reproached for sleeping with a sorrowing heart, while there is no need to worry because the gods are watching over her son.

825–9 A familiar type of divine encouragement: ‘take courage (θάρσει), for such (τοῖος) a helper is there, god X’; cf. II. 15.254–7; 21.288; and 24.152–4.

842–3 An abrupt change of scene † leads to the Suitors.

The *‘departure by ship’ type-scene is resumed from 778–86 and quickly brought to an end: (vii) the men go on board (842a); the usual element of (x) a god sending a favourable wind is lacking, of course, because the gods do not support them. The actual *sea-voyage is described briefly (842b), as usual; the narrator is more interested in reminding us once more of the Suitors’ bad intentions. The expression φόνον αἰπύν, ‘utter death’, triggered by the Suitors’ embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘devising . . .’), belongs to the character-language †: twice embedded focalization † (here and II. 17.365), once in direct speech.

844–7 The *‘there is a place X . . .’ motif emphatically introduces the island Asteris, the location of the ambush.

847 The narrator leaves the Suitors while they ‘wait in ambush’. Though the narratees have just been assured that Telemachus will come home safely, this open end is sufficiently menacing (how is Telemachus going to escape?) to be called a ‘cliffhanger’; cf. Appendix B. The Suitors will re-enter the story in 16.342ff. The narratees are reminded of their ambush in 5.18–19; 13.425–6; and 14.180–1; of their presence in the palace in 11.115–17.
book five

Finally, the narrator again picks up the ‘Odysseus’ storyline, which he had dropped in 1.95, and we meet our hero in person. The rhythm of narration increases considerably, since a mere 500 lines deal with day seven to – the first part of – day thirty-two; cf. Appendix A. Whereas in the Iliad summarized periods occur mainly at the beginning and end of the story (nine days of the plague, twelve days of Hector’s body lying unburied), in the Odyssey they are clustered here (four days of completing the raft: 262; first seventeen days of Odysseus’ voyage on the raft: 278–9; two days of Odysseus floating on the sea: 388–90).

These days offer a variety of scenes: we begin with a divine council (1–42), which picks up the divine council in Book 1 and marks the return to the ‘Odysseus’ storyline. Then we have a ‘visit’ type-scene, in which Hermes brings Calypso the news of Odysseus’ ‘release’ (43–148). There follows the ‘farewell’ scene between Odysseus and Calypso, with splendid displays of rhetoric on both sides (149–227). After these high-strung emotions, a quieter mood sets in with the scene of the building of the raft and the initial peaceful part of Odysseus’ voyage (228–78). We end with the most elaborate ‘storm’ scene in the Odyssey and Odysseus’ landing on Scheria (279–493).

1–42 The first council of the gods (1.26–95) announced both Hermes’ visit to Calypso and Athena’s visit to Telemachus. Athena’s visit (and all that it leads to: Telemachus’ trip to Pylos and Sparta) having taken place, the narrator now turns to Hermes’ visit. The importance of the moment (Odysseus is about to return home) and the large distance (2,222 lines) between the announcement of Hermes’ visit and its fulfilment lead him to make that visit the occasion of a second divine council. This second council
(i) presupposes and (ii) continues the first one.\textsuperscript{1} \emph{Ad} (i): Poseidon’s crucial absence is not recorded again, after 1.22–6; Calypso is mentioned in passing, after her introduction in 1.50–9; and Zeus’s instruction to Hermes would come as a surprise if it were not for its preparation in 1.84–7. It may strike modern readers as strange that the first council is nowhere explicitly referred to (e.g., Athena saying ‘let us now send Hermes as we decided some days ago’). However, such explicit back-references are rare in the Homeric epics (cf. 24.456–60 and \emph{Il.} 16.61–3). Instead, characters are simply made to repeat their ideas and it is left to the narratees to detect the implicit back-reference. Often, they are helped by the fact that the repetition of ideas also involves \textit{verbatim} repetition. Here even this is lacking, but cf. 13.172–8; 15.92–134; and 19.1–52nn. (and \emph{Il.} 16.36–45, where Patroclus repeats – \textit{verbatim} – Nestor’s suggestion that he should fight in Achilles’ armour, without once referring to Nestor himself).\textsuperscript{2} \emph{Ad} (ii): according to the ‘continuity of time’ principle †, time has passed for the gods too, and indeed we see Athena referring to the latest developments on Ithaca, the Suitors’ ambush of Telemachus (organized the previous day; cf. 4.658–74n.). The narratees may now admire the effectiveness of the narrator’s order: having first worked out the ‘Telemachus’ storyline and sketched the situation on Ithaca, he has engaged their interest in Odysseus’ return; they wish him to come home as quickly as possible, not only for his own sake, but also for that of his son, his wife, and his \textit{oiκos}.

1–4 The change of scene †, from the island Asteris, where the Suitors are hiding in ambush (4.844–7), to Olympus, is abrupt. This abruptness is tempered by the *sunrise which mentions the gods (1–2). This sunrise is significant in another respect, too. The reference to Tithonus (Eos’ mortal lover, made immortal by her) previews an important topic to follow: Calypso in 121–4 will come to speak of another mortal lover of Eos, Orion, and in 208–9 (and cf. 135–6) will offer to make her mortal lover Odysseus immortal. An argument against this contextual interpretation is the use of the same sunrise in \emph{Il.} 11.1–2, where the reference to Tithonus is not significant; an argument in favour is the existence of a similar sunrise without Tithonus, \emph{Il.} 19.1–2, which was at the narrator’s disposal.

5–6 Whereas Zeus, ‘remembering’ Aegisthus, opened the first council,

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} Reichel (1994: 47–8).
\end{itemize}
and Athena deftly used the occasion to bring up Odysseus’ case, she now takes the initiative right from the beginning, ‘remembering’ Odysseus (the *forgetting/remembering* motif). The — unique — speech-introduction, which takes the form of Athena’s embedded focalization †, informs the narratees beforehand about the contents of the ensuing speech; cf. 1.29–31n.

7–20 The ‘cares’ of Odysseus which Athena ‘sums up’ in her speech are: (A) the situation on Ithaca, i.e., the consumption of Odysseus’ goods by the Suitors, who are not being hindered by the Ithacans (8–12), (B) his involuntary stay with Calypso (13–17), and (C) the Suitors’ ambush against Telemachus (18–20, note the climactic νῦν οὖν, ‘and now again’). Strictly speaking, Odysseus does not know of the third care, but his ‘advocate’ Athena views the situation from his perspective. This becomes clear from her reference to Telemachus as παῖδ’ ἀγαπητόν, ‘his dear son’ (18); the adjective is used only for Telemachus, by persons who have a ‘parental’ relationship to him (Euryclea: 2.365 and Penelope: 4.727, 817). The mention of the ambush is purely rhetorical and is intended to stir the emotions of her addressees; just before, Athena herself had comforted Penelope, assuring her that Telemachus would come home safely (4.787–841n.). Her specious pleading at this point will be seen through by Zeus (25–7).

Athena’s speech consists almost entirely of lines spoken by other characters in Books 2–4: 8–12 = 2.230–4; 14–17 = 4.557–60; 18–20 = 4.700–2.3 The verbatim repetition indicates that Athena is giving the gods an updated description of Odysseus’ plight, including the latest developments on Ithaca.

21–42 Although Athena had spoken to Zeus and the other gods, it is Zeus who feels called upon to respond (in two moves) to the points raised by her: in his first speech (21–7) he deals with (A’) the presence of the Suitors in Odysseus’ palace and (C’) Telemachus; in his second speech (28–42) with (B’) Odysseus on the island of Calypso.

The device of giving Zeus two successive speeches instead of making him change his addressee in the course of one speech allows for the introduction of a fresh speech-introduction, which emphatically marks the change of addressee (Hermes instead of Athena) and topic (Odysseus instead of the Suitors and Telemachus). Other examples of ‘two consecutive speeches by one speaker’ are 6.186–210; 11.92–137; 15.535–43; 17.392–404; 18.349–64; 19.89–99; 20.190–225; 21.167–80; II. 1.571–94; and 4.188–97.

21–7 As in the first council, Zeus is irritated when Athena brings up Odysseus’ case (22 = 1.64). As far as the Suitors in the palace are concerned, has she herself not already planned for Odysseus to take his revenge on them upon his return? Actually, Athena had not mentioned Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors in the first council. Zeus’s knowledge can be explained either as *divine omniscience or – more likely – as an instance of transference †: the narrator provides him with knowledge which the narratees already have (since 1.253–69, where Athena talked to Telemachus about Odysseus’ revenge). Where Telemachus is concerned, she has the power to take care of him herself. Once again (cf. 4.658–74n.), the narratees are assured that the ambush will be a failure and that Telemachus will come home safely. Zeus’s use of line 26, which elsewhere refers to Odysseus’ nostos (cf. 5.144 = 168), stresses the similarity between the experiences of father and son; cf. Introduction to 1.

29–42 Zeus’s second speech is an ‘instruction’ speech, i.e., it contains the message which Hermes is to deliver to Calypso. That message will be delivered twice: first by Hermes to Calypso (97–115), then by Calypso to Odysseus (159–70); other examples of thrice-repeated messages are Il. 2.11–15: 28–33a: 65–70 and 6.87–97: 269–79: 306–10. Whereas in the Iliad ‘delivery’ speeches repeat verbatim or with minor adjustments ‘instruction’ speeches, in the Odyssey messengers take more liberties; cf. 17.553–9n. Zeus announces that Odysseus will leave Calypso on a raft and reach the Phaeacians, who will escort him home. Hermes tells Calypso only that Zeus orders her to let Odysseus go home (i.e., he leaves out the raft and the Phaeacians). Calypso, in turn, tells Odysseus that he may go and – of her own accord – introduces the raft, but makes no mention of Zeus’s order (this is part of her strategy to try and keep Odysseus with her; cf. 149–227n.). This leaves Odysseus, who is last in the chain of communication, the least well informed: he does not know that Zeus has decided upon his return (hence his initial distrust of Calypso in 173–9), or that he will first go to the Phaeacians (hence his weary question in 6.119–21).

At the same time, Zeus’s speech is a *‘table of contents’ speech, which gives the narratees an idea of what to expect: Odysseus’ sorrowful voyage on the raft (cf. 5.269–493) and his stay with the *Phaeacians (cf. 6.1–13.77), who will escort him home safely (cf. 13.78–125). The divine foreknowledge

which is here shared with the narratees allows them to watch closely and admire the way in which Odysseus accomplishes the future plotted for him by Zeus. It will be his own doing that the Phaeacians come to ‘honour him as a god, providing him with gifts and an escort’; cf. also 13.36–69n. At the same time, there is *suspense: Odysseus, lacking the divine perspective, has to go through many a frightening moment, and, in accordance with the Homeric principle of ‘gradual revelation’ (a form of paralipsis †), Zeus does not reveal the future in all its details; thus, the narratees are not told that the ‘suffering’ announced in 33 will take the form of a storm caused by Poseidon.

41–2 For the idea that Odysseus is fated to return, cf. 1.16–18n.

43–148 Hermes’ visit to Calypso is an instance of the *‘visit’ type-scene: he (i) sets off (43–54; expanded by a ‘dressing’ type-scene, description of the journey, and simile); (ii) arrives (55–8a; doubled: first on the island, then at the cave); (iii) finds Calypso in her cave (58b–75, expanded with a detailed description of the scenery surrounding the cave); (iv) is received by Calypso (76–91); (v) is given a meal (92–4), and (vi) a conversation follows, in which Hermes delivers his message and Calypso reacts to it (95–148).

The scene brings more than the transmission of Zeus’s message: it prepares for the meeting between Odysseus and Calypso which follows, in that it introduces the topic of immortality versus mortality (when Calypso discusses liaisons between men and goddesses) and repeatedly draws attention to the remoteness of Calypso’s island (51–4, 55, 80, 100–2; and cf. 1.50), which explains Odysseus’ despondency (he finds himself trapped at the end of the world, surrounded by an endless stretch of sea and without a ship).

Neither Hermes nor Calypso mention Odysseus’ name during their conversation, instead referring to him by ἐνδρα (105, 129), τόν (111, 112, 130, 134, 135), μύν (139, 140, 142), and οἱ (113, 114, 131, 142, 143); the *‘suppression of Odysseus’ name’ motif. Hermes’ motive might be rhetorical (referring to Odysseus as ‘a man . . . wretched beyond all the other men who fought before Troy’, 105–6, is aimed at arousing Calypso’s pity); *Calypso still seems to be concealing Odysseus.

43–58 The change of scene †, from Olympus to Ogygia, is accomplished by having the narrator follow Hermes.

44–8 As in the case of Athena in 1.96–101, a *‘dressing’ type-scene adds

---

6 Edwards (1975: 64–7) and Baltes (1978: 8–17).
weight to the moment of departure. Hermes’ magic wand is his permanent attribute (cf. the epic τε in 47), with which he is endowed by the narrator at all his appearances in the epics (cf. 24.2–4; II. 24.340–4), even when he does not make use of it. The attribute is his ‘trademark’; cf. his epithet χρυσόρρατις, ‘of the golden wand’ (87; 10.277, 331).

49–54 Whereas in 1.102–3 Athena reaches her destination at once, Hermes’ journey is described in some detail; cf. II. 13.17–31; 14.224–31, 281–5; and 24.78–82. It is given added weight through the insertion of a simile. Similes are a regular but not obligatory accompaniment to divine voyages. The primary function of the simile † is to suggest Hermes’ speedy and expert flight over the sea, skimming over the waves like a bird (we are dealing with a comparison rather than a metamorphosis; for Homeric ‘bird’ scenes, cf. 1.319–24n.). But it conveys more: what is described is a continuous, horizontal movement (after the quick, vertical jump from Olympus, via Pieria, to the sea). Thus the simile also brings home the distance which separates Calypso from the rest of the world; cf. 43–148n. One detail stands out as somewhat surprising in this description of an expert and effortless flight: δεινοῦς κόλπων, ‘the dangerous hollows’. The combination is unique—the standard epithet of κόλπος is εὐρύς, ‘broad’—and seems coined to remind us of Odysseus’ situation: for him (though not for the bird or for Hermes) the sea is an almost insurmountable barrier; cf. 174–5 (‘the sea’s great open space, dangerous, δεινόν, and toilsome’).

63–75 Scenery † in Homer often is described at the moment when a character arrives at a place and is in principle focalized by the arriving character; cf. esp. 7.81–135; 14.7–22; 17.260–73nn. Hermes’ embedded focalization † is here marked explicitly (75–6: ‘he stood in admiration’), the effect being heightened by the insertion in 73–4 of the *(not) even + hyperbole’ motif (‘even a god would admire Calypso’s cave’). Another indication of the god’s focalization is the use of the past tense. In principle, one would expect scenery to be described in the present tense or gnomic aorist; after all, we are dealing with omnitemporal geography or with the habitat of mythical people, which is likewise assumed to be omnitemporal. Indeed, we do find present-tense scenery descriptions, notably in the instances of the *(there is a place X’ motif. However, when characters focalize scenery, we

---

usually find past tenses; cf. 237–40, 400–5; 6.85–8; 7.81–135; 9.116–41; 17.204–11; 24.205–12nn. The description is spatially organized: ἐμφαί (63, 72), περί (68), ἐξείης (70). What is described is a locus amoenus: trees (cf. 1.51: Calypso’s island is δενδρᾶσσα, ‘rich in trees’), birds, water, flowers, and nice scents. The function of this detailed description and the emphatic indication of Hermes’ admiration is to strengthen the contrast which follows in 82–4: Odysseus does not enjoy his stay in this paradise.

76–91 Hermes’ reception displays several anomalies: (a) instead of waiting at the door, he immediately enters Calypso’s cave (77a; the deviation seems caused by his coming as a messenger rather than an ordinary guest); (b) his host does not merely see him but recognizes him (77b–80; the explanatory remark added by the narrator allows him again to stress Calypso’s distance from the inhabited world; cf. 43–148n.); (g) she offers him a seat and (e) gives a ‘welcome’ speech (85–91).

Contrary to Hermes’ expectation – and that of the narratees, which is based on 1.15 (‘in her hollow caverns’) and 4.557, 5.14 (‘in the palace of the nymph’) – he does not find Odysseus (81–4); cf. 9.216–17; 24.222–5; and II. 6.371–3. One last time, our confrontation with the hero of the story is postponed. The narrator wants to exclude him from the conversation between Hermes and Calypso, so that later the nymph can make one last attempt to keep her lover with her. Odysseus’ whereabouts are filled in for the narratees by the omniscient narrator, who also indicates that this is the hero’s usual location (‘where before now he had been sitting’) and usual occupation (iterative δερκάκετον, ‘he all the time looked at’). The scene serves a double function: (i) Odysseus’ position on the beach symbolizes his rejection of Calypso: he literally turns his back on her and her idyllic surroundings, a pregnant instance of the ‘seashore’ motif (cf. 2.260n.). (ii) The evocation of Odysseus just before Hermes’ and Calypso’s conversation ensures us that, despite his physical absence, he will be the central focus of their talks.

85–91 After several references to Calypso11 in previous books (1.14–15, 48–59; 4.556–60), the narratees finally meet her in person. She has been ‘concealing’ (κολύπτω) Odysseus for seven years in her cave on her remote location.

---

island, trying to make him forget home (1.57). Hers is a hospitality gone awry: she detains her guest against his will (14–15 = 4.557–8), something which a good host would never do (cf. 7.315–6 and 15.68–74). Odysseus will recall his stay with her in 7.244–66 and 23.333–7.

Calypso is a character doublet † of Circe; cf. Odysseus mentioning them in one breath in 9.29–33. Both are ‘awesome’ (δεινή: 7.246, 255; 10.136; 11.8; 12.150, 449) and ‘crafty’ (δολόεσσα: 7.245; 9.32) goddesses, who are ‘endowed with a human voice’ (αὐδήεσσα: 10.136; 11.8; 12.150, 449), live on remote islands, sing, have ‘malign’ (ὁλοφρόν: 1.52; 10.137) relatives, ‘bewitch’ (θελεῖν: 1.57; 10.213, 291, 318, 326), and have an affair with Odysseus. There are also differences, however. Circe is a real witch, using drugs and a magic wand; Calypso’s bewitching goes no further than ‘wheedling words’. Circe has no difficulty parting from Odysseus; Calypso would have preferred him to stay with her forever and only parts from him because she is ordered to do so by Zeus.

Calypso’s speech only at the end when she invites Hermes to come forward (which he has in fact already done: cf. 77 and 86) and eat resembles a *welcome’s speech. Indeed, she breaches the etiquette of the *identification of a guest ritual and asks him the reason for his visit before she has offered him a meal. The anomaly is brought to the fore by the speech-introduction with ‘she asked’, instead of ‘X caught Y’s hand and called Y by name and spoke to Y’, which is found in the comparable situation in Il. 18.384–7. Calypso is very surprised at Hermes’ unexpected visit. She immediately utters standard words of cooperation (89–90 = Il. 14.195–6 = 18.426–7), which the narratees may interpret as dramatic irony †, since they know that Hermes will ask her something which she will be most unwilling ‘to accomplish’.

92–4 Though this is the customary moment for a meal (after the reception and before the conversation), here it effectively creates a pause between Calypso’s eager question and Hermes’ reluctant answer.

95–148 Hermes and Calypso’s dialogue has a parallel structure †, which points up how Calypso is struggling against Zeus’ order and contrasts her perspective with that of the male gods:

---

Hermes  
(introduction) I will answer your question (97–8).

A  
It was Zeus who ordered me to come here. I did not want to go, but there is no way to elude Zeus’s will (99–104).  
(he hints that Calypso, like himself, has to obey Zeus)
In his ‘delivery’ speech Hermes saves Zeus’s message for the end, where he repeats it in an abridged form (112–15; 114–15 = 41–2); cf. 29–42n. First he feigns dislike for his mission, using a *rhetorical question (99–104), and summarizes the way in which Odysseus has come to Calypso (105–11). Both circuitous movements are subservient to his final message. Just as he, Hermes, had to obey Zeus and reluctantly embark on his long travel, so Calypso, he implies, has to obey Zeus and let Odysseus go; the repetition of ἐπιτελήσω (99, 112) underlines the parallel. The rhetorical nature of Hermes’ complaint becomes clear when we look back at the narrator-text, which contains no sign of reluctance; on the contrary, the god ‘did not disobey’ (43) Zeus when ordered to go, and ‘immediately’ (44) set out. Hermes’ summary of Odysseus’ travels is intended to impress on Calypso that his stay with her is only an episode in this hero’s life, which is destined to end at home. Calling Odysseus ‘a man … wretched beyond all the other men who fought at Troy’ (105) and using the *all the others, but X alone’ motif (110–13), he tries to elicit the goddess’ pity. Of course, the narratees know that ‘the man’ Hermes is talking about is Odysseus, but the identification is enhanced by ὅπως ὑπάρχει (105, which in the Odyssey refers exclusively to Odysseus; cf. 3.95; 4.325 (Telemachus speaking), and 832 (Penelope speaking).
108–11 Hermes’ summary of Odysseus’ nostos is highly elliptical: he jumps from the first phase, when all Greeks suffered under Athena’s wrath, to the end (thus far), Thrinacia. As a result of his telescoping, Athena is made responsible for the storm after Thrinacia, which in fact was sent by Zeus. Thus in his version of Athena’s wrath (cf. 1.325–7n.), Hermes for once foregrounds Athena’s destructive role, which elsewhere is played down. His motif is clear: he is trying—in vain (cf. 130–2)—to detract attention from Zeus, who is now urging Odysseus’ return.

113–15 For the idea that Odysseus is fated to come home, cf. 1.16–18n.

116–44 Calypso reacts with a shiver, which in Homer always follows when someone sees or hears something frightening; the nymph is awed by Zeus’s sudden and forceful intervention into her secluded life.

Her speech displays a quick succession of emotions: anger (‘Zeus’s order is just another instance of male jealousy’: 118–29), indignation (‘I saved Odysseus, whereas Zeus shipwrecked him’: 130–6), resignation (‘let him go’: 137–40),12 petulance (‘don’t expect me to help him’: 140–2), and loving care (‘but he must be safe’: 143–4). Thus it gives expression to the confusion into which Hermes’ visit has thrown her.

118–29 Calypso uses a priamel to indict the jealousy of the male gods: ‘you are hard-hearted and jealous, whenever you resent . . . (summary), just as when . . . (first foil from the past), and just as when . . . (second foil from the past). So now you resent in me . . . (climax).’13 Adducing the examples of Orion and Jason she exaggerates; they were actually killed by the gods, whereas Odysseus is only being taken away from her and sent home. In her eyes, however, not letting Odysseus stay with her virtually amounts to killing him, since she would have made him immortal and ageless (136), while Zeus’s order exposes him to the dangers of the sea.

149–227 The scene between Calypso and Odysseus is the longest and most dramatic of three partings from loving women in the Odyssey: cf. 8.457–68n. (Nausicaa) and 10.475–95n. (Circe).14 Here is a mature woman (contrast the teenager Nausicaa), who wholeheartedly loves him (contrast the casual Circe). In a series of three speeches (159–70, 180–91, 202–13) Calypso follows a conscious strategy to try one last time to persuade Odysseus to stay with her: in the first two she shows herself sympathetic to his plight and cooperative with respect to his departure (but carefully with-

holds the information that Zeus himself has ordered his release), only to suggest in her last speech that he stay. *Odysseus has to use all his – characteristic – diplomacy to turn down her offer without hurting her (and thereby forfeiting her all too necessary help).

150–9 The scene starts off as a ‘meeting’ type-scene (cf. also 24.1–204):15 (i) Calypso sets off (149–50. The back-reference to Zeus’s message, coming so shortly after its delivery, is unusual; cf. Il. 17.697. It stresses that Calypso, in going to Odysseus and indicating that she will let him go, is acting under the compulsion of Zeus’s order); (ii) arrives (-); (iii) finds Odysseus (151–8); (iv) positions herself near him (159a); and (v) addresses him (159b).

The narratees finally meet the hero in person. This passage provides the most complete description of Odysseus’ distress, after earlier glimpses in 1.13–15, 48–59; 4.556–8; and 5.81–4. In order to arrive at such a complete portrayal, the narrator intrudes upon Calypso’s embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘she found’) and gives information which exceeds the scene she is actually watching, an instance of paralepsis †: his night-time occupations and his feelings in the past; note the iterative tenses (iαυεςκεν, δερκέσκετο), which indicate that these are habitual actions. The narrator stresses that Odysseus now sleeps with the nymph ‘unwillingly’ and ‘only by constraint’ (εναγκὴ), just as she keeps him with her ‘by constraint’ (14 = 4.557). The constraint is not of a physical or magical nature, but lies, as in the case of Phemius singing for the Suitors (1.154), in the force of circumstances; Odysseus simply does not have the means to leave her.

The characterization † of Odysseus – not surprisingly – is the most complex of all Odyssean characters, employing all methods.16 There are chunks of explicit narratorial characterization (1.1–5) and actorial characterization (Zeus in 1.66–7; Mentor in 2.229–34; Nestor in 3.120–2, 126–9; Helen in 4.240–1; Menelaus in 4.267–70; Penelope in 4.724–6 = 814–16; Athena in 13.291–8; Eumaeus in 14.62–7 and 138–47; Odysseus himself in 5.222; 9.19–20). From Book 5 onwards Odysseus will implicitly characterize himself, by his words, his deeds, and – in his case, very prominently – his unspoken thoughts (cf. 14.109–10n.). What amounts to a complete *biography of Odysseus can be pieced together by the narratees on the basis of the

many stories told about him, by others and by himself. We find the following personality traits: piety, courage, distrust (cf. 171–9n.), diplomacy, sagacity as a counsellor, intellectual curiosity (cf. 9.224–30n.), foresight (cf. 9.196–215), wiliness, justness as king and gentleness as master (cf. 2.229–34n.), solicitude as leader (cf. Introduction to 9), endurance, and the ability to keep silent. The many years of wandering and his meetings with exotic people do not radically change Odysseus, but rather strengthen his inherent characteristics; cf. Introduction to 9. But his is not a totally ideal character; at times he is reckless (when he insists on meeting Polyphemus), proud (when he reveals his true name to his vanquished opponent Polyphemus), open to erotic temptation (when, after a year with Circe, his men have to remind him to go home), despondent (when he is marooned on Calypso’s island; at the moment of shipwreck before Scheria; or the night before his revenge on the Suitors), and irascible (when Penelope suggests that their marital bed has been moved). These—all too human—weaknesses of course only contribute to the narratees’ interest in the story and its main hero; not everything is predictable and, as Aristotle would later understand so well, there is room for identification with the hero.

159 The speech-introduction with *standing nearby* suggests affection.

160–70 In her first speech (cf. 149–227n.) Calypso brings Odysseus the good news (but in a carefully abridged way; cf. 29–42n.): ‘unhappy man, weep no longer nor let your lifetime fade away (the echoes from the narrator-text, δύναμις in 160≈δυναμένω in 153, αἰών φινέτω in 160–1≈κατείβετο . . . γλυκὺς αἰών: 152, signal that Calypso is no longer looking at Odysseus’ situation from her own point of view, as she did in her conversation with Hermes), for I will finally send you home (omitting Zeus’s order, she takes the credit for his ‘release’). You must build a raft (Hermes had not repeated to her this part of Zeus’s message but it is only logical for her to come up with the idea, considering she has no ships to offer him, cf. 141–2; it has also been prepared for in 143–4, when she announced to Hermes that she would ‘counsel’ Odysseus; the echo of πρόφρον, ‘with forward mind’: 143 in πρόφρασσα: 161 suggests the connection between the two passages). And I will give you provisions and send a favourable wind, in order that you may reach your country safely (168≈144), if the gods so wish, who are stronger than I am (although her tactic forbids her to speak of Zeus’s order, she cannot resist giving vent to her frustration at being overruled by him and refers to it obliquely, but clearly enough for the narratees)’.
κόμμορος, ‘unhappy man’ is used in the Odyssey always (five times) in connection with Odysseus, and is always spoken by characters who sympathize with his suffering (Telemachus: 2.351; Ino/Leucothea: 5.339; Anticlea: 11.216; Athena: 20.33).

Odysseus’ reaction to the news of his ‘release’ is the same as Calypso’s: a shudder (171 = 116). Not knowing the divine background to her sudden change of mind, he distrusts her when she suggests crossing the dangerous sea on a raft, and asks her to swear that she has no ‘hidden agenda’. Later, he will guess the truth behind Calypso’s sudden initiative (‘by a message from Zeus or whether her own mind turned within her’: 7.263).

Distrust is one of Odysseus’ distinctive character traits; cf. 356–64; 10.336–47; and 13.324–8.

The ‘oath’ type-scene usually consists of the proposal of an oath (in direct speech) and the actual swearing (summarized); cf. 2.373–8 and 12.297–303. Here, by exception, the swearing is also presented in direct speech: we have a standard part (184–6 Il. 15.36–8) and a verbatim repetition of what Odysseus had suggested that Calypso should swear (187 = 179).

In her second speech (cf. 149–227n.) Calypso continues her strategy of showing her best side: she smiles at Odysseus’ distrust and playfully scolds him (cf. Athena in 13.287–95), readily swears the oath he suggested, and stresses her sincerity and pity.

An instance of the ‘he sat down on the seat from which he had risen’ motif; cf. 18.157; 21.139, 166, 243, 392; 23.164; and Il. 24.597. Here it is given a subtle twist: Odysseus sat down on the seat from which Hermes—note the emphatic runover position—had risen. Odysseus does not know about Hermes’ visit, but the narratees do and they are reminded of it just prior to the moment when Calypso tries to wriggle out of Zeus’s order conveyed by him.

Before launching her final attack, Calypso dines Odysseus. Noting explicitly that he is served mortal food, while she is served immortal food, the narrator subtly makes clear, even before Odysseus’ final rejection of immortality, the unbridgeable gap between ‘goddess and man’ (cf. the telling periphrastic denominations † in 194).

The fact that Calypso seats herself opposite Odysseus indicates that she will address him; a significant seating arrangement.

Arend (1933: 122–3).
202–13 On the surface, this is a *‘farewell’ speech (cf. χαπε: 205), but in fact it is Calypso’s last and decisive speech in a series of three; cf. 149–227n. Now she lets the cat out of the bag. She makes a suggestion – thinly disguised as a potential conditional – that Odysseus should stay with her. The impact of the moment is reflected in her formal address: ‘Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus’. Calypso uses two arguments to persuade Odysseus: (A) if he leaves he will have sorrows, whereas if he stays with her he will be immortal (206–10), and (B) her divine beauty surpasses that of his mortal wife (211–13). In other words, she plays her trump card: immortality.

Although the speech-introduction is neutral (‘the talking began’), Calypso’s speech is very emotional: she starts with feigned incredulity (‘Do you really want to go home all of a sudden?’), proceeds with resignation (‘farewell all the same’, i.e., I hope you fare well, despite the fact that I do not understand why you want to go), only to introduce a veiled threat (‘if only you knew what is awaiting you’), which leads to her main point (‘you would stay with me, although you long for your wife’). Her final words are ironic (‘I certainly do not claim to be inferior to her in beauty’) and again faintly threatening (‘for it does not beseem mortal women to vie with goddesses in beauty’; cf. the *‘mortal challenges immortal and dies’ motif). No more ‘soft and wheedling words’; she feels hurt by Odysseus’ desire to return.

Hermes did not tell Calypso what Zeus said about the ‘sorrows’ which Odysseus will suffer before reaching Scheria (33). Thus when she speaks of the ‘sorrows’ which he is still fated to undergo (206–7), this can be explained in three ways: (i) *divine omniscience, (ii) transference †, or (iii) her own invention, for rhetorical purposes.

209–10 Calypso, of course, interprets Odysseus’ desire to return in terms of his longing for his wife (whom she does not deign to mention by name); cf. 1.13n.

215–24 In his answer, Odysseus takes up Calypso’s arguments in reverse order †: (B’) he diplomatically concedes the point of her superior beauty (‘catch-word’ technique †: his εηδωσ picks up hers in 213), but reiterates his wish to return, tactfully substituting the neutral ‘home’ for ‘Penelope’ as the object of his desire to return (215–20), regardless (A’) of the dangers he may encounter on his way (221–4). In other words, Odysseus rejects immortality and accepts mortality. His brave rhetoric, ‘if some god will shipwreck me on the wine-blue sea, I will endure this, because I have already endured much’,
will soon be put to the test, when Poseidon does shipwreck him (291ff.).
*Odysseus refers to his famous capacity to endure (τλήσομαι, ταλαπωνθέω, ‘bearing up against trouble’, a hapax), which he himself also feels is a distinctive trait of his character.

Odysseus’ speech means the final and definite rejection of Calypso’s offer. After this the subject is dropped and no more conversation between the two is recorded, although Odysseus stays another five days; cf. the more dramatic example in II. 6.390–502, where we have the ‘farewell’ scene between Hector and Andromache, although Hector will live for several more days.

229–32 A double *‘dressing’ type-scene (229: Odysseus, 230–2: Calypso) adds weight to this solemn day, which starts off Odysseus’ return. The ‘immediately’ (cf. 5.44) stresses Odysseus’ eagerness to start building the raft.

233–62 This scene brings – in ample detail – the fulfilment of Calypso’s suggestion of 162–4, the building of the raft. It is an instance of the dynamic description † of an object: the raft is described as it is being built; cf. Achilles’ shield in II. 18.478–608 and Priam’s wagon in II. 24.265–74. The detailed description marks the important moment when Odysseus starts the final and definite phase of his long nostos. The dynamic nature of the description brings to the fore two things: Odysseus’ skill (cf. ‘quickly’: 243, ‘expertly’: 245, ‘skilfully’: 259, the comparison with a skilful carpenter: 249–51n.) and Calypso’s loving assistance (she keeps on giving him instruments and bringing materials: 234, 237–42, 246, and 258). The twice repeated device of *simultaneity (in 246 and 258) enhances the picture of Odysseus and Calypso working together industriously and efficiently; cf. 4.435–6n.

The remainder of the work is presented in the form of a summary †: one line describes four days (62); cf. Introduction. Its effect is to strengthen the age of Odysseus energetically tackling the job of building the raft.

237–40 It now proves convenient that Calypso’s island is ‘rich in trees’ (1.51). In the neighbourhood of Calypso’s cave there are alders and poplars (64), but she goes to a particular spot where there are also long firs, which are ‘already long sapless’ and ‘very dry’ and hence might ‘float easily for him’. The spot is (implicitly) focalized by Calypso, as the past tenses (cf. 63–75n.) make clear.

249–51 The primary function of the ‘carpenter’ simile † is to give an
indication of the size of Odysseus’ raft (cf., e.g., 9.321–3). Its secondary function is to draw attention to Odysseus’ skill (the man he is compared to is ‘well skilled in carpentry’); for Odysseus’ carpentry, cf. also 23.190–201.

263–8 Odysseus’ departure: fulfilling her promise of 165–7, Calypso dresses him, gives him *provisions, and sends a favourable wind (cf. 2.382–426n.). The narrator does not tell us that Calypso also gives Odysseus nautical advice, but postpones this information until a more apt moment (272–7); an instance of paralipsis †.

Calypso is not the only woman in the Odyssey to give Odysseus clothes;20 Nausicaa does so (6.214: to hide his nakedness), Arete (8.441; 13.67: to honour her guest), Circe (10.542: to prepare for his descent into the Underworld), Athena (13.434–5: to turn him into a beggar), and – in the past – Penelope (19.255–7: to wear on the expedition to Troy). Calypso’s clothes will in fact play an important role in the ensuing events: they weigh him down, when he has been thrown into the water (321); Ino/Leucothea urges him to take them off (343), which, after some hesitation, he finally does (372), so that he stands naked before Nausicaa (6.130ff.).

269–81 Odysseus’ voyage starts off quite propitiously: he is a skilled steersman (270), does not fall asleep (271; a positive instance of the *‘sleep’ motif), and has received precise information from Calypso (272–7; those who are inclined to take these astronomical details at face value should realize that almost the exact same constellations occur as decoration on Achilles’ shield in II. 18.486–9). Thus, seventeen days pass uneventfully within one line (278; a summary †), and on the eighteenth day land comes in sight. No wonder that for the first time in the story we see an Odysseus who is happy (269). This peaceful scene increases the effect of the contrast to follow: the storm.

273 The narrator invokes anonymous spokesmen (‘they call’) to give another name for the constellation ‘Bear’.21 Using the present tense he indicates that this nickname is still current in his time. The other ‘they call’ passages also concern phenomena which are omnitemporal: part of the human body (II. 5.306), a river (II. 20.74), constellations (II. 18.487; 22.29), birds (II. 24.316), a mythological figure (II. 1.403), a herb (10.305), and a mountain (12.61). Of course, this omnitemporality only holds good for the narrator and his narratees; for us, present-day readers, these names belong largely to the past.

279–493 It now appears that the sorrows announced by Zeus (33–4) and bravely anticipated by Odysseus himself (221–4) take the form of a storm sent by his arch-enemy Poseidon; for Poseidon’s wrath, cf. 1.19–21n. This god’s intervention comes as a surprise to the narratees, in that Zeus had announced in 1.77–9 that the god would give up his wrath.

This is the longest *storm’ scene in the *Odyssey*. Its length is effected mainly through the insertion of speeches (six), similes (five), and doublets †. 22 Taken together, this results in the following structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>standard</th>
<th>addition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>279–81 place and location</td>
<td>first monologue by Poseidon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>282–90 winds, clouds, darkness</td>
<td>first monologue by Odysseus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>291–6</td>
<td>winds, clouds, darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>297–312 (doublet) first wave:</td>
<td>Winds, clouds, darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mast, sail, and upper deck broken off, Odysseus survives on raft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>333–53 first divine intervention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>354–64 second monologue by Odysseus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>365–74 (doublet) second wave:</td>
<td>Winds, clouds, darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>raft destroyed, Odysseus survives on beam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>375–81 second monologue by Poseidon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>382–7 second divine intervention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>388–493 landing</td>
<td>third and fourth monologue by Odysseus, prayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scene displays a brilliant example of the ‘zooming in’ technique (cf. 3.4–67n.), in that the narrator follows the perception of Odysseus as he slowly approaches Scheria: in 279–81 the mountains on the island (of the Phaeacians; this detail must derive from the narrator) become visible, the island, which to Odysseus resembles a shield (i.e., rises up from the sea with a gentle curve towards the middle); in 358–9 he sighs that land is still ‘far off’ (ἔκας, contrast Poseidon’s angry perception in 288 that Odysseus is ‘near’, σχεδόν, land and hence safety); in 392 for him too, looking ahead sharply and lifted up by a wave, land is ‘nearby’ (σχεδόν) and in 398 he is

able to perceive the woods; in 400–5 + 411–14 he hears the breakers and can get a good look at the steep coast; this makes him in 439–40 decide to swim on, looking out for a beach or harbour; in 441–3 he finally spots a place to go ashore, the mouth of a river, bare of rocks and out of the wind.

279–90 In Homer we often find the ‘action-perception-reaction’ pattern: something happens (Odysseus gets near Scheria: 279–81) – this is seen by a character (Poseidon: 282–4a) – who reacts with a speech, in which he verbalizes his perception and takes/suggests action (284b–290). Cf. 7.233–9; 8.283–94; 10.373–87; and 16.4–48nn.

279–81 Odysseus meets with disaster ‘within sight of the harbour’, as the Dutch expression goes; cf. 9.79–80 and 10.29–30.

282–4 Poseidon is brought on stage by the typically Homeric technique of having him see Odysseus; cf. 1.328–9n. For Poseidon’s stay with the Ethiopians, cf. 1.22–6n.

286–90 The Homeric epics contain four divine monologues: here, 377–9; Il. 17.201–8 and 443–55. Like the mortal monologues, they are triggered by a perception (cf. 299–312n.). They are never deliberative, but consist of a combination of an emotional reaction (anger or pity) and the announcement of an action. They all have the same speech-introduction: ‘shaking his head he said to himself’.

Poseidon’s permanent anger against Odysseus is intensified (cf. 284) by two facts: the gods changed their minds about Odysseus while his back was turned, and Odysseus has almost reached safety. Poseidon shows himself aware of *Odysseus’ fate, to arrive at the Phaeacians; this is due either to his *divine omniscience or to transference † (the narratees know since Zeus’s speech of 33–42 that Odysseus will come to the Phaeacians).

295–6 This is the only case in which we hear of the four winds Boreas, Eurus, Zephyrus, and Notus blowing together; for the combination Boreas and Zephyrus, cf. Il. 9.4–7 and 23.194–218; for Eurus and Notus, cf. Il. 2.144–6; 16.765–9; for Notus and Zephyrus, cf. Il. 11.305–8; 21.334–7. Their joint effort suggests the terrible force set up by Poseidon against Odysseus.

299–312 The Odyssey contains eight monologues spoken by mortals, mainly Odysseus: here, 356–64, 408–23, 465–73; 6.119–26; 9.447–60 (Polyphemus); 13.200–16; 20.18–21. The many monologues spoken by *Odysseus (i) are the logical correlate to his being/acting alone, and (ii) con-

tribute to his characterization: the narratees are given an ongoing insight into the workings of his mind.

Homer monologues are triggered by a perturbing, frightening, or surprising perception, which is usually described also in the monologue itself. The speech-introduction often contains ὠχθησας, ‘deeply troubled’ (here, 355, 407, 464; Il. 11.403; 17.90; 18.5; 20.343; 21.53, 552; 22.98); although its etymology is disputed, it is clear that the verb conveys a mixture of feelings (distress, frustration, anger), which a person has when confronted with a sudden unpleasant or baffling experience. Monologues are either reflective or deliberative; in the case of a deliberative monologue, a decision may be reached at the end of the monologue itself, or reported by the narrator, or never taken at all. As in the case of indirect deliberations, it is usually the second – rational – alternative which is chosen or takes place.

Odysseus’ first monologue is reflective: ‘(emotional opening) What will become of me? I fear that Calypso was right, who said that I would suffer sorrows at sea before coming home. (cf. 206–7) Now all that comes to pass, to judge from the storm which Zeus has sent me. (the perception which triggered the monologue; cf. 291–4) (pessimistic conclusion) Now my death is certain. (impossible wish) If only I had died before Troy. (pessimistic conclusion) Now I will die.’

Although the narratees know that Odysseus is destined to come home, their certainty is temporarily shaken by his despondency. This is one way of building up suspense, despite the Homeric custom of revealing the outcome of the plot beforehand.

300–2 An instance of the ‘recalled prophecy’ motif.

303–5 Odysseus’ narration of the storm in part mirrors that of the narrator (clouds cover the sky: 303 = 293b–294a, (Zeus) ‘has staggered the sea’: 304a = 291b, winds blow from every direction: 305a = 293a), but it differs on one point: it ascribes the storm to Zeus instead of to Poseidon (Jörgensen’s law †). Odysseus will later (446; 6.326; 7.271) correctly connect the storm with Poseidon, having by that time been informed by Ino/Leucothea (cf. 339–40) of this god’s role.

306–11 For the wish for a heroic death on the battlefield (followed by burial in a grave-mound which ensures one’s kleos), cf. 24.21–34n.

Odysseus in fact wishes for a very specific death: while defending the body of the most famous of warriors, Achilles; cf. Achilles in *Ilium* 21.279–83, who prefers death at the hands of his greatest opponent Hector to drowning.

313–32 Poseidon’s ‘attack’ on Odysseus is presented by the narrator with compassion: cf. δεινόν/νή, ‘horrible’ (314, 317); the *sympathetic* dative ofl (316); the unique qualification of the sea-water as ‘bitter’ (322–3); and the ‘thistle plant’ simile (327–32).

316 A *sympathetic dative* stresses the emotional bond between owner and possession and therefore tends to be found (outside speeches) in passages of embedded focalization † or in pathetic parts of the simple narrator-text † such as here; cf. 3.401; 4.789; 8.277; 16.11, 339; and (in Odysseus’ *Apologue*) 12.114, 245.

321 For the importance of Calypso’s clothes, cf. 263–8n.

327–53 An instance of the *‘action-perception-reaction’ pattern*: Odysseus is tossed about on the sea (327–32) – Ino/Leucothea sees Odysseus being tossed about and suffering (336) – and reacts with a speech, in which she verbalizes her perception and suggests a course of action (339–50).

Odysseus is supported in his present troubles not by his divine protectress Athena – she waits until Poseidon has left the scene (382) – but, appropriately enough, by a sea-nymph. The support which Ino/Leucothea offers Odysseus consists of (i) sympathy (she calls him *καμμορός*, ‘poor man’; calls Poseidon’s anger excessive; and speaks of ‘many evils’), (ii) information (the storm is sent by Poseidon, contrast Odysseus’ own hypothesis in 304. Poseidon will not kill him; cf. 1.74–5. It is his destiny to reach the Phaeacians; cf. 34–5 and 288–9), (iii) advice (to take off the clothes which weigh him down; to leave the raft and swim to the island; note the imperative infinitives in 346, 349, 350, which are characteristic in this context; cf. 10.505–40n.), and (iv) a magic veil (cf. Hermes’ gift of the magic herb *moly* in 10.302–6).

327–32 The primary function of the simile † of the thistle plants is to illustrate how Odysseus’ raft is being tossed over the sea by the winds and the waves (ἐφόρει, ἰμ πέλαγος . . . φέρον = φορέσιν . . . ἰμ πεδίον). Its secondary function is to evoke Odysseus’ helplessness: without steering oar or sail, his raft is completely at the mercy of the elements.

333–5 Ino/Leucothea is brought on stage by having her see Odysseus; cf. 1.328–9n.

---

26 Chantraine (1953: 71–2).
337–53 An instance of a divine *‘bird’ scene. In the present case, it seems more likely that we are dealing with a comparison than a metamorphosis; cf. 351, where Ino gives the veil, and 356–7, where Odysseus is sure that he has been speaking with one of the gods. The narrator compares her to a diving bird, so as to illustrate the way she suddenly ‘pops up’ from the sea (337) and then disappears into it again (353).

339–40 For the pun on Odysseus’ name in ὀδῦσατ’, cf. 19.401–9n.

345 Ino/Leucothea’s knowledge of Odysseus’ fate can be explained along the same two lines as Poseidon’s; cf. 286–90n.

354–64 Odysseus’ second *monologue is deliberative: ‘(emotional opening) I fear that the goddess’ advice to leave the raft may be a trick. I will not follow it, for I have seen that the island where I am supposed to land is still far away. (cf. 279–81) (transition) But I will do as follows (360): (first scenario) As long as the raft is still intact, I will stay on it. (next scenario) When a wave breaks it, I will swim.’

The insight into *Odysseus’ mind reveals three of his characteristics: his distrust, his capacity to endure (cf. τλῆσομαι: 362), and his foresight (cf. προνοησαί: 364).

358–9 For the gradual ‘zooming in’ on Scheria, cf. 279–493n.

365–75 Even as he is deliberating, what Odysseus had foreseen in 363 happens (a second wave shatters what is left of his raft) and he now does what he had planned in 364 and what Ino/Leucothea had advised him to do in 343–7: while sitting on a beam he takes off Calypso’s clothes, puts on the magic veil, leaves the beam, and starts swimming.

368–70 The simile † illustrates the enormous force of the wave, which shatters the large beams of the raft as if they were mere chaff in the wind. The imagery recalls the simile in 328–32. As in that case, the simile may also have a pathetic function: to suggest the position of Odysseus as mortal victim of overwhelming divine powers.

374–9 An instance of the *‘action-perception-reaction’ pattern: Odysseus starts swimming in the sea – this is seen by Poseidon – who reacts with a speech.

377–9 Poseidon takes his leave with a second monologue, which forms a ring with his first monologue (286–90): his ironic conclusion ‘I hope you will not think little of the hardships [which I gave you]’ (379) refers back to his threatening announcement ‘I think I can still give him his fill of hardships.’ This time he apostrophizes Odysseus, who, of course, cannot hear the
god’s words. The two monologues by Zeus in *Il.* 17.200–8 and 442–55 are also apostrophes; the ‘you’ form adds to the threatening effect of these divine monologues, which all herald sorrow for mortals.

380–1 As usual, the return home of a god who has interfered in the life of a mortal is explicitly recorded; cf. 6.41–7n.

382–7 No sooner has Poseidon left the scene when Athena goes into action, her intervention being marked by the *‘X thought of something else’* motif. For her circumspection towards this god, cf. 6.323–31n. She can do no more than make things somewhat easier for Odysseus: since Zeus had ordained a period of twenty days for him to reach the Phaeacians (34) and the storm took place on the eighteenth day (279), he still has two days to go (cf. 388–9). *Athena’s embedded focalization (386–7; shifter: ἄνο + optative) reassures the narratees that Odysseus is going to reach Scheria safely.*

388–90 The effect of the summary †—two days are described in two lines—is one of intensification: for a seemingly endless time Odysseus, who must do without the assurance which the narratees received in 386–7, stares death in the face.

394–9 The primary function of this simile †27 is ‘advertised’: to illustrate Odysseus’ joy at the sight of land, which resembles the joy of children at the (return to) life of a father who is ill (‥ςτάσις . . . φανή = ἀπαστών ἐφίκτη). A secondary function is thematic. We are dealing here with a ‘role reversal’ simile:28 a character is cast in a role which is the reverse of his true status (parent becomes child, man becomes woman, victor becomes victim), and/or which recalls another character in the story (Telemachus compared to a traveller = Odysseus, Penelope compared to a king = Odysseus, Penelope compared to shipwrecked sailors = Odysseus); cf. 8.521–31; 16.17–21; 19.107–14; and 23.233–40nn. Thus the parent Odysseus is here compared to the children. For the relationship with the ‘reverse’ simile of Penelope being cast in the role of shipwrecked sailors at the moment of her reunion with Odysseus, cf. 23.233–40n. But there is another secondary function. The narratees are also invited to compare Odysseus with the father in the simile: Odysseus, too, is ‘suffering strong pains’ (cf. 13 and 336), has been attacked by a *δαμν, has (finally) been ‘released from his woe by

---


the gods’, which makes him joyful (ῐ́στασιν ̓= ῖσταστόν). Thus this is also an instance of a *‘parents and children’ simile. The narrator increases the pathos by using character-language †: στυγερός, ‘terrible’ (twenty-four times in speech, four times in embedded focalization: 24.414; Ἄλκ. 4.240; 13.670; 14.158, six times in simple narrator-text, of which twice in a simile: here and in 22.470).

400–5 The scenery † of the Scherian coast is focalized by Odysseus,29 as is suggested by (i) the *‘as far . . . as a shouting voice carries’ motif, which is here contextually relevant (Odysseus can now hear the breakers); (ii) the past tense (404, 405; cf. 63–75n.); and (iii) the *‘description by negation’ technique, ‘there were no harbours or roadsteads’, which reflects his disappointment (404; cf. 399). For the ‘zooming in’ technique, cf. 279–493n.

408–23 Odysseus’ third *monologue is deliberative: *(emotional opening)* Having, against all odds, crossed the sea, I now see no chance to get ashore, for the coast consists of steep rocks and the sea is deep close on shore (verbalizing himself the perception which triggered the monologue, cf. 400–5, Odysseus uses even stronger language: the cliffs are ‘sharp’ and the rocks are ‘slippery smooth’). *(first alternative)* If I try to step out of the sea, I fear that a wave will throw me against the rocks. *(second alternative)* But should I swim on, I fear that either a wave will throw me back into the high sea again or a god will send a monster. For I know Poseidon is angry at me. *(dramatic irony †: whereas the narratees know that Poseidon has just left the scene, Odysseus still fears further actions from that god)*

The monologue reveals *Odysseus’ foresight: he anticipates what might happen to him, and one of the scenarios actually comes true; cf. 424–43n.

421 The use of δεκμον is expressive of Odysseus’ emotional state of mind: the word is used almost exclusively by human speakers, whenever they feel that a god is interfering directly in their life, usually in a negative way.30 It belongs to the character-language †: forty-eight times in direct speech, fourteen times in narrator-text.

423 For the pun on Odysseus’ name in ὅδωδουσται, cf. 19.401–9n.

424–43 While Odysseus is still deliberating, events overtake him; a pathetic use of the device of *simultaneity. As in 354–70, what happens is more or less what he had foreseen: a wave throws him against the rocks (425; cf. 415–16), then he is thrown back into the sea (430–1; cf. 419–20) and

nearly drowns, but he manages to swim on, looking for a smooth beach (439–40; cf. 417–18). The only anticipated danger which does not befall him is the attack by a sea monster (cf. 421–2).

Close together we twice find the tension raising device of the ‘if not’-situation †: ‘there X would have happened, if Y had not intervened’ (426–7 and 436–7). Both times it is Athena who intervenes; it is typical of the relationship between goddess and hero (cf. 13.297–9) that she does not so much act herself as suggest to Odysseus what he should do. The narrator’s statement that Odysseus’ death would have been ‘contrary to his fate’ (utoryerver: 436) can also be taken in a meta-narrative sense: this would have been contrary to the plot and the tradition (cf. I.16–18n.); cf. Il. 2.155 and 17.321.

432–5 The simile † illustrates the force with which Odysseus frantically clings to the rock. Whereas the octopus, being dragged out of its hole by a fisherman, takes with it pebbles, Odysseus leaves behind the skin of his hands. The combination yraseiãvn . . . xeiœv, ‘his bold hands’ (434), usually occurs in battle descriptions;31 its use here adds a heroic flavour to Odysseus’ struggle with the elements.

436 δυστηνος, ‘wretched’, belongs to the character-language †: it is found only here in narrator-text, as against twenty-one times in speech. In the Odyssey it is typically used of Odysseus; cf. I.48–62n. It here either represents Athena’s implicit focalization or it is triggered by the pathetic device of the ‘if not’-situation (cf. 424–43n.).

444–53 A *‘supplication’ scene in a special form: his circumstances (he is swimming) do not allow Odysseus to follow the normal supplication ritual. He can only hold a *‘supplication’ speech (cf. ıkãno, ἴκηται, σά . . . γοῦναθ’ ἴκνω, ἴκετης) which, because he is addressing a god, takes the form of a *‘prayer’: (i) speech-introduction with a verb of praying (444b. The addition ‘in his mind’ implies that a breathless Odysseus does not utter his prayer; cf. Il. 23.769, where likewise the person praying is out of breath); (ii) invocation of the deity (445a); (iii) claim to favour (445b–449; Odysseus does not refer to services in the past or future but, in accordance with his status of suppliant, claims that he is αἰδοῖος, deserving of the god’s respect); (iv) request for help (450a); (v) speech-capping and deity’s response, which here consists of action rather than the common ‘the deity heard (ἐκλυε) him/her’ (451–3a).

This supplication may be considered an anticipatory doublet † of the two major ‘supplication’ scenes to follow in 6.148–85 and 7.146–52.

453–7 The description of Odysseus’ exhaustion is an expanded and pathetic version of 9.74–5 = 10.142–3. The combination κάματος . . . σίνος, ‘a terrible weariness’ otherwise occurs only in speech: II. 10.312, 399.

458–62 No sooner has Odysseus come to himself again when he throws back Ino/Leucothea’s veil, according to her instructions (459–62 = 348–9).

462–3 The gesture of kissing the ground, which elsewhere is found when people kiss the soil of their fatherland upon their return (4.522 and 13.354), here gives expression to Odysseus’ relief at exchanging the toilsome and dangerous sea for solid ground.

464–73 Odysseus’ fourth *monologue is deliberative: ‘(emotional opening) What will become of me? (first alternative) If I spend the night near the river, I am afraid that the cold will be too much for me in my exhaustion. (διλιγησσέων in 468 = διλιγησσής in 456–7) (second alternative) But if I go up the slope and to the wood, I fear I may become a prey for wild animals.’

474–5 Odysseus’ decision is reported when executed; he chooses the second alternative, to go to the wood.

476–87 Odysseus finds a place to sleep which is described in terms which elsewhere are used for the lair of a wild boar: 478–80 = 19.440–2, 483 = 19.443. To the narratees this suggests the dehumanized situation he finds himself in; it also prepares for 6.130–7, where he will be compared to a hungry lion. Odysseus himself, however, focalizes his improvised bed with pleasure, as the *description by negation’ technique ‘neither wind nor sun nor rain could penetrate’ in 478–9 suggests. Likewise, his joy at the sight of the heap of leaves (486) finds expression in an instance of the *(not) even + hyperbole’ motif (‘there were enough leaves to protect two or three men against the cold, even if the weather should be very bad’).

488–91 The primary function of the simile † of the man who hides a burning log in a heap of ash is to illustrate how Odysseus covers himself with leaves: ἐνέκρυψε = καλύψατο. But its details (the man has to ‘save the seed of fire’, because he has no neighbours who could rekindle his fire) are also suggestive of the flicker of life which Odysseus still feels inside him and which he ‘saves’ with the utmost care.

491–3 It is Athena who makes Odysseus fall asleep, just as it will be through her influence that the hero awakens again (6.117). The goddess will use the interval to make arrangements for the hero’s reception at Scheria.
**Sleep** is an important motif in the *Odyssey*: it can be harmful (cf. 5.271–2: Odysseus does not allow himself to sleep during his ‘solo’ sailing voyage; 8.443–5: Arete warns Odysseus to seal his box of gifts, so as not to be robbed during his sleep; 10.31–55 and 12.338–73: Odysseus’ companions open the bag of winds and slaughter Helius’ cattle while he is asleep) or beneficial (here; 1.362–4 and *passim*: Athena puts Penelope to sleep to make her forget her grief for Odysseus; 2.395–8: Athena puts the Suitors to sleep, so as to prevent them from noticing Telemachus’ departure; 9.371–4: the Cyclops’ deep sleep allows Odysseus to blind him; 13.73–92: Odysseus forgets his sorrows and sleeps while the Phaeacians bring him home; and 18.187–205: Athena pours a beauty sleep over Penelope).

493 The unique combination δυσπνεός καμάτοιο, ‘from the exhaustion of his hard labours’ gives expression to the goddess’ caring embedded focalization † (shifter: ἵνα + optative).
BOOK SIX

Odysseus’ three-day stay with the Phaeacians, his last adventure on his way home, is narrated at considerable length: 6.1–13.187.1 In many respects the Phaeacians occupy a middle position: they are ‘close to the gods’, receive the gods at their tables, and lead a life of luxury and carefree bliss like theirs, and yet like all mortals they pray to the gods and are punished by them; they were once associated with the Giants and Cyclopes (the Phaeacians once lived near the Cyclopes; a forefather of the royal family of the Phaeacians was king of the Giants; Poseidon is the father of both the Cyclops Polyphemus and the Phaeacian Nausithous), but at some stage distanced themselves from the other two (both literally, by moving away from the Cyclopes, and figuratively, by calling the Giants ‘wild tribes’); their existence has fairytale aspects (magic ships, trees which continually produce fruit), yet the organization of their society resembles that of Ithaca, Sparta, and Pylos (king reigning as primus inter pares within a council, assembly of the people, games, heroic songs, rules of hospitality). Their intermediary nature makes them eminently suited to form the transition from the fairytale world of Odysseus’ adventures to the reality of Ithaca. The marital bliss of the reigning couple and the social harmony of their people remind Odysseus of what he aspires to at home. At the same time, their isolation (they are never visited by others) and unheroic existence (they never wage war) make clear to him by contrast – as when Calypso offered him immortality – why home is to be preferred to this paradise; staying with the Phaeacians ‘would be a living death’.2

2 Clarke (1967: 54).
The Phaeacians are not introduced at the beginning of the episode, but the narratees gradually get to know about them, both in the form of implicit characterization † (cf. in particular the elaborate ‘scenery’ description in 7.81–135) and of explicit characterization (cf. especially the historical introduction by the narrator in 3–13, and the self-introductions to Odysseus in 203–5, 262–85; 7.32–6, 201–6; and 8.246–9).

The role of the Phaeacians was set out by Zeus in 5.36–40: they will bring Odysseus home (cf. Introduction to 7 and 7.318–28n.), honour him as if he were a god, and provide him with rich gifts (cf. 8.389–93n.). This is only a brief indication of what is to come and of the significance of the Phaeacians.

In the first place, it is during his stay with the Phaeacians and partly through them that Odysseus regains his heroic status and confidence, indeed his identity. Thus they will remind him of his heroic past (through Demodocus’ Trojan songs: 8.73–82 and 499–520, which lead up to his self-identification) and his proverbial cleverness and endurance (when he is persuaded to tell them his Apologue), show him that he still has a powerful body (during the games: 8.131–240), and through their lavish guest-gifts more than compensate him for the loss of his Trojan booty. The episode starts with a naked and nameless stranger and ends with an Odysseus who is fully restored to his former self, and ready to return home and face the situation there.

In the second place, the Phaeacian episode resembles Odysseus’ vicissitudes on Ithaca after his return and therefore functions as an anticipatory doublet †: in both cases, Odysseus wakes up on an (unknown) shore, has an encounter there, leaves the shore and seeks hospitality while concealing his identity, meets with kindness but also abuse (from arrogant young men), has a night-time conversation with a mighty queen, and only gradually reveals his qualities, strength, and identity; cf. 7.229–347; 8.104–468nn. As usual, the second version will surpass the first in length and importance; thus Scheria is a rehearsal for the hero of more difficult tasks ahead. For the similarities to Telemachus’ stay in Sparta, cf. Introduction to 4.

But if his stay with the Phaeacians is a success for Odysseus, it definitely is no ‘walk-over’. In the first place, there is Nausicaa. Once again during his wanderings, Odysseus is confronted with female temptation; the repeated

---

references to Circe and Calypso (8.448, 452, and 9.29–33) encourage a comparison with his earlier encounters with loving women. It all starts with Athena, who employs the idea of marriage (in general) to move Nausicaa to the spot where Odysseus finds himself (27, 33); Odysseus uses it to compliment the girl (‘blessed is the man who will marry you’: 158–9 and cf. 180–5), but otherwise he avoids all eroticism on his part (he hides his genitals: 129; refrains from touching Nausicaa’s knees: 146–7; and refuses to be washed by her servants: 218–22); for Nausicaa and her father, a marriage to the stranger becomes a serious option (244–5, 275–85; 7.311–15); implicitly, it underlies Arete’s anxious question to the stranger who gave him the clothes (7.237–9). When Odysseus has revealed who he is and emphasized how he spurned earlier marriages with goddesses (9.29–33), the issue is not raised again. The narratees will scarcely take the suggestion of a marriage between Odysseus and Nausicaa seriously, being constantly reminded of how Athena is plotting Odysseus’ nostos (14; 8.9) and how anxious the hero is to return home (290; 7.223–4; 9.19–36). It does, however, create tension: how is Odysseus to handle this delicate situation?

A second complicating factor is the Phaeacian hospitality. They are not used to strangers, living as they do far from other societies (6.204–5), and they do not like them (7.32–3). The royal couple are at first hesitant hosts (Alcinous in 7.153–66, Arete in 7.233–9). There are hints that the Phaeacians are sharp-tongued (273–85; 7.16–17), which leads Athena to cover Odysseus with a mist when she leads him through the city (7.14–143). One of the young nobles does indeed behave rudely towards the stranger during the athletic games (8.131–85). In the end, however, the Phaeacians will prove to be excellent hosts. Against this background, it is all the more tragic that they will be punished for their hospitality by Poseidon (cf. 13.125–87n.).

Book 6 contains the day part of the thirty-second day (cf. Appendix A), which brings the meeting between Odysseus and Nausicaa. This is the longest instance of the ‘stranger meets with local inhabitant’ story-pattern: a person who has just arrived on the coast of a foreign country meets with a local inhabitant, often the child of the rulers of the country, and is escorted by him/her to the palace; cf. 4.363–425; 7.18–81; 10.103–17; 13.221–440;

---


14.317–20; and 15.415–60nn. Here the story-pattern is doubled at the end: when Nausicaa decides to bring Odysseus only to the edge of the city, and not to her father’s palace (255–315), it is Athena, disguised as a young girl, who finishes the job (7.18–81).

Although *Athena acts on Odysseus’ behalf throughout the *Odyssey*, she is particularly active at this stage: she arranges for Nausicaa to go to the beach with clothes (2–47), takes care that Odysseus wakes up and sees her before she returns (110–14), prevents Nausicaa from fleeing before him like the other girls (138–40), and leads him secretly through the city to Alcinous’ palace (7.14–81).

1–51 The new episode starts off with a *dream* type-scene, in the form of a monologue: (i) indication of person sleeping, here not the dreamer, but Odysseus (1–2); the nocturnal visitor Athena (ii) sets out (2–14, expanded to include information about the Phaeacians); (iv) comes to the person she is looking for (15–19); (v) positions herself at the dreamer’s head, in the guise of a female friend of Nausicaa’s (20–3); (vi) speaks (24–40); and (vii) leaves (41–7, expanded to include a description of Olympus); (viii) Nausicaa wakes up and reacts with amazement to her dream (48–51).

1–19 The change of scene †, from the shore to Nausicaa’s bedroom, is accomplished by the narrator following in the footsteps of Athena. He takes leave of Odysseus with an appositive summary † (1–2), which allows him to stress once more (cf. 5.457, 493) the hero’s exhaustion.

3–13 After two brief references to the *Phaeacians* (Zeus calls them ‘close to the gods’ in 5.35 and Athena focalizes them as ‘oar-loving’ in 5.386), the narrator now tells us more about them, in the form of an external analepsis †, which is marked off by progressive ring-composition †: Ἄνδρων δὴμόν τε πόλιν τε... τοῦ μὲν ἥν πρὸς δῶμα. The information is tailored to the context. (i) The Phaeacians were once terrorized by the Cyclopes and removed themselves from them (which makes them a suitable audience to hear Odysseus’ triumph over one Cyclops in 9.105–564), setting up a far-away society complete with a walled city, houses, temples, and agriculture (which indicates that they are civilized). Note that Odysseus does not receive this introductory information and in 119–21 he will ask himself what kind of people he has arrived at this time. (ii) The figure of Nausithous, Alcinous’ father, is introduced, who will become important in 8.564–70. (iii) One of the main figures in the ensuing books, *Alcinous*, is ‘plugged’; he is said to be ‘endowed with divine wisdom’. 
14 *Athena’s embedded focalization (shifter: ‘planning’) reassures the narratees that the ensuing action, where she incites Nausicaa to go to the beach to wash, and in which Odysseus will not feature at all, is nevertheless designed to further his nostos.

15–19 Nausicaa is the only Homeric character to enter the story while lying asleep. The narrator immediately stresses her most salient feature: her beauty (which rubs off on her servants). A comparison with gods is often used to suggest beauty (cf. 17.37n.), but in Nausicaa’s case her divine beauty (stressed again by the narrator in 101–9 and 8.457) is particularly relevant, in that in 149–52 (and cf. 7.291) Odysseus will compare her to a goddess. The presence of two servants in her bedroom signals her chastity; cf. Penelope’s servants (1.328–66n.).

A pawn in Athena’s scheme to secure Odysseus’ return, Nausicaa7 will exceed the limits of her plot function and become a character with interests of her own (hence her ‘curtain call’ in 8.457–68). She comes alive as a young, intelligent, and self-assured person. There are close similarities between the figures of Nausicaa and *Telemachus:8 both enter the story when on the threshold of adulthood; are urged to cross that threshold by Athena, who holds out marriage to Nausicaa, public life to Telemachus; leave the safety of their homes, Nausicaa to go to the beach, Telemachus to Pylos and Sparta; have encounters with mature and famous adults, Nausicaa with Odysseus, Telemachus with Nestor, Menelaus, and Helen; are given courage by Athena; and after their first performance are cared for fondly by doting servants.

20 A comparison with winds suggests speed; cf. II. 10.437; 16.149; and 24.342. In the present context it may also literally describe the way in which Athena enters the bedroom through its closed doors (19); cf. 4.802 and 838–9.

25–40 A typical ‘dream’ speech (cf. 4.804–7; 15.10–42; 20.30–57; II. 2.23–34; 23.69–92; 24.683–8): *(rebuke)* You are negligent (25). *(situation)* Your clothes lie unwashed, while your marriage is near (26–30). *(advice)* Let us go and wash and ask your father for a wagon (31–40).* It is a brilliant accomplishment, in that it serves Odysseus’ cause, providing him with clothes and an escort to the city, while at the same time it is perfectly natural

---

7 Kakridis (1971: 141–50) and Gross (1976).
and appropriate to Nausicaa’s situation and character: her desire to be a
good daughter (cf. 57–66, 106, 154–7, 286–8), to have a good reputation
among the people (cf. 187–97, 273–85), and to marry (cf. 244–5, 275–85).
‘Dymas’ daughter’/Athena here announces that she will go with
Nausicaa as her helper (32), but in the sequel no mention is made of her.
Nausicaa in 49 realizes that she has been dreaming and will no longer expect
any action from Dymas’ daughter; the narratees, who know the real iden-
tity of the speaker, may take the words as true in another sense: Athena will
be present at the washing scene (though more to help Odysseus than
Nausicaa).

41–7 A divine intervention is usually concluded by a statement that the
deity ‘went away to X (Olympus)/back’; cf. 5.381; 7.78–81; 15.43; 16.177;
20.55; II. 1.221–2; 5.866–8; 15.79, 219; 21.298; 24.468, and 694. This is by far
the most elaborate instance: we are given a full description of Olympus,
which is marked off by ring-composition (ἐπηβολή...Οὐλομμένη...’=ἐνθ’
ἐπηβολή).9 The use of the present tense indicates that, just as the gods them-
selves are eternal, their habitat is omnitemporal; cf. 4.566–8. Both the
‘description by negation’ technique (which stresses that Olympus is
exempt from all those weather conditions which make human life difficult)
and the fact that the narrator exchanges his usual omniscience for a
restricted human focalization (he presents his description as mere ‘hearsay’: φασὶ)10 suggest that the passage serves to stress the difference between the
gods, living their lives of pleasure in an ideal climate, and the mortal
Odysseus, who has just struggled with the elements for two days, now lies
exhausted, and will soon face new exertions.

48–9 A unique *sunrise. It resembles those of 10.541; 12.142; 15.56, 495;
and 20.91 in that it comes ‘immediately’; all these ‘immediate’ sunrises
follow upon nocturnal deliberation or story-telling.

49–51 Nausicaa’s surprise at the dream and the final clause ‘so as to
report (the dream) to her parents’, lead the narratees to expect that she will
divulge her dream. In point of fact, however, she will not refer to the dream
at all, nor to the suggested marriage (56–70); the effect of this misdirection †
is to make Nausicaa’s reticence all the more conspicuous.

51–84 The scene between Nausicaa and her parents has a homely and
intimate tone, thanks to the narrator’s use of periphrastic denomination †

instead of proper names: ‘father’ (51, 56, 67); ‘mother’ (51, 76); and ‘daughter’ (74, 78); cf. the unique address (in speech) πότεν πατρίς φίλ’ (57).

Nausicaa meets her parents while they are engaged in typically female and male royal activities: her mother spinning (a ‘sea-purple’ yarn, appropriate for the queen of a seafaring nation; cf. 13.108, the yarn of the Nereids), and her father on his way to the council. Her father’s official function will be exploited by Nausicaa in her speech to him (60–1). Arete’s spinning (cf. again 305–7) will acquire a dramatic relevance in 7.234, when she recognizes the clothes of the stranger, ‘which she herself had made with her serving women’.

The charm of the exchange between Nausicaa and her father lies mainly in what is not said by each of them: Nausicaa does not mention the real reason for wanting to wash the clothes (her marriage); her father does not reveal that he sees through her smoke screen. His all-encompassing formulation ‘I do not begrudge you the mules nor anything else’ can be seen as an implicit, positive answer to her unexpressed desire to marry. The first appearance of *Alcinous reveals one of his characteristics: a sensitivity to another person’s feelings.11

56 The speech-introduction with *standing (very) near’ suggests intimacy.

66–7 The narrator adds a speech evaluation, to spell out what was left unsaid by Nausicaa; cf. 1.413–21; 12.206–25; 16.448; 18.281–3; and 21.96–100nn. In other places it is left to the narratees to detect what has been passed over.12

71–84 Nausicaa’s departure takes the form of a *departure by car’ type-scene: putting together the wagon (72–3a; an addition; this process is described in full in I. 24.266–74); (i) harnessing the animals (73b); loading the dirty clothes (74–5; an addition); supplying *provisions (76–8a; this addition signals Nausicaa’s position as beloved child and prepares for 248–50 when a starving Odysseus will also benefit from the food); (ii) mounting the wagon (78b); providing oil (once again, Odysseus will benefit from this motherly gift, too: 215, 227); (iii) taking up the whip and reins (81); (iv) whipping up the animals (82a); (v) the animals move (82b–84; the unique expansion ‘they carried the clothing and the girl’ serves to stress once more that the clothing, which will be needed to cover the naked Odysseus, is there).
81–4 The *not alone’ motif introduces the female servants who will play an active role in the ensuing events.

85–109 Through this uneventful episode (the girls do what they set out to do, wash the clothes, and then have a bath, eat, and play with a ball), the narrator heightens the tension: when will the confrontation with Odysseus finally take place?

85–8 The use of the past tense suggests that the washing places are focalized by Nausicaa and her company (shifter: ‘they reached’); cf. 5.63–75n. They choose this particular spot, because it contains enough water to wash ‘even the most dirty clothes’.

88–91 A rustic version of the *arrival by car’ type-scene: (ii) unharnessing the animals; (iii) feeding (instead of the usual grain and barley, the mules are sent out to ‘graze on the honey-sweet clover’); and unloading (addition).

89 The epithet ‘whirling’ of the river is a seed †: in 116 Nausicaa will throw a ball in one of the whirlpools.

101–9 Though mortals are regularly compared to gods in Homer (in the form of epithets or comparisons), this is one of the few full-blown similes†;13 cf. Il. 2.478–83; 7.208–12; 13.298–305. Its primary function is to illustrate how Nausicaa stands out among her servants. The comparison to a goddess again (cf. 15–19) brings home the girl’s beauty, the comparison to Artemis her virginity (cf. the telling periphrastic denomination † ‘virgin unwedded’ in 109). Its secondary function is to foreshadow the ensuing scene: Nausicaa’s position of pre-eminence amidst her peer group prepares for her solo performance in 138–210; her resemblance to the goddess Artemis and the pleasure of a parent (Leto) in a child will return in Odysseus’ speech to Nausicaa (149–52, 154–7); the comparison of the servants to nymphs is echoed in Odysseus’ question in 123–4.

110–11 An instance of interruptive μελλω: μέλλω in the imperfect tense + future infinitive indicates that the action which a person is about to undertake is either postponed (as here: the folding of the clothes and yoking of the mules will not follow until 252–3, the departure in 316–17) or never takes place;14 cf. 135–6; 7.18; 10.275–6; 17.412–13; and 22.9. Again (cf. 85–109n.), the narrator heightens the suspense: Nausicaa had almost left without meeting Odysseus.

112–14 The *X thought of something else’ motif marks a forceful inter-

vention by Athena: having made her protégé fall asleep in 5.491–3, she now realizes that the girls are about to go home and that the time has come for him to wake up, see Nausicaa, and be led by the girl to the city. It is the narratees, not Nausicaa and Odysseus, who by means of *Athena’s embedded focalization (shifter: final ὑσ + optative) are informed about her intentions. In this way they are given some idea of the sequel to the story, without being robbed of the delight of seeing how the two characters accomplish what Athena desires of them. Athena does not herself wake up Odysseus, but the narratees may suppose that it is she who makes one of the servants throw badly, which creates the shouting which wakes up Odysseus (115–17); for gods influencing the course of projectiles, cf., e.g., *II. 4.127–33.

115–41 The first phase of the meeting between Odysseus and the girls contains a cluster of mock-heroic elements:15 115–16 are a parody of the ‘warrior throws a spear, misses his target, and hits someone else instead’ motif (cf. e.g. *II. 4.489–92; 13.183–6); the ‘shouting’ of the girls in 117 is described by means of a verb (ἐρωτάω) which usually refers to the shouting of men in battle contexts;16 in 130–6 we have a parody of a martial ‘lion’ simile; and in 138 the girls flee in all directions from the naked man (cf. the Trojans fleeing before Ajax: *II. 11.486).

119–26 This is the last in a series of monologues spoken by Odysseus when he is alone, i.e., in the interval between Calypso and the Phaeacians (cf. 5.299–312n). It is a deliberative *monologue: ‘(emotional opening) What kind of people have I come to this time? I hear the shouting of girls, (perception which triggered the monologue; ἐπιτή ὑσ: 117) (first alternative) nymphs. (second alternative) Or am I near mortals? (decision) But I will take a look and *test them.’

119–21 Odysseus asks more or less the same question in 9.174–6 (when about to embark on his first big adventure, the Cyclops) and in 13.200–2 (before his last adventure, his coming home); and cf. 9.89 and 10.101, when he sends out men to find out what people they have arrived at. The question characterizes him as a man who has ‘seen the cities and got to know the mind of many people’ (1.3; and cf. Alcinous’ question in 8.575–6: ‘tell us what people you have come to, which were savage and violent, and without justice, and which were hospitable and with a god-fearing mind’). By now a certain weariness has crept into the question, as transpires from ὧν, ‘this

time’. Although Ino/Leucothea told him in 5.345 that he would come to the Phaeacians, she did not give him any clue as to what kind of people they are.

127–210 Nausicaa is the first of the Phaeacians whom Odysseus has to win over in order to secure his return. His supplication of Nausicaa may be seen as a rehearsal for his later – official – supplication in the palace (7.139–206), but the unusual situation he finds himself in (he is naked and frightening to look at) and the nature of his addressee (a young girl in an exposed situation) make it a very special case. We find the usual elements of the *supplication’ scene, with expansions and modifications: (i) approach (127–41a; expanded with a simile and divine intervention); (ii) gesture of supplication (141b–147; here, after a deliberation, abandoned); (iii) ‘supplication’ speech (148–85); and (iv) (positive) reaction of *supplicandus* (186–210).

130–7 This is the second ‘lion’ simile † devoted to Odysseus in the *Odyssey*; cf. 4.333–40n.17 Its primary function is to make clear Odysseus’ reluctance: just as a lion only approaches cattle which are grazing near human habitation (instead of in the mountains with a solitary herdsman) when driven to by hunger, it is need (for clothes and guidance, cf. 178–9) that forces the naked Odysseus to mix with the girls; the narrator adds to the pathos of the situation by using character-language † (χρεία, ‘need’, occurs twenty-two times in direct speech, once in embedded focalization †: *Il.* 8.57). The narratees may smile at the parody of the traditional ‘lion’ simile; this lion is not urged by his ‘proud heart’ (cf. *Il.* 12.300) but by his ‘belly’. A preoccupation with the needs of the belly is typical for the *Odyssey*, especially for its main hero Odysseus; cf. 7.207–25n. The secondary function of this simile is to give expression to the way in which the girls focalize Odysseus: in their eyes, Odysseus is as frightening as a lion, not only because he is a man and might harm them (cf. 199–200) but especially because, like that animal, he is disfigured through exposure to the elements (the lion is ‘rained on and blown by the wind’, Odysseus is ‘befouled through brine’). Things develop very differently from what Odysseus had expected: in 5.473 he was fearful of becoming the prey of wild animals; now he is confronted with girls who see him as a wild animal.

135–6 The use of *interruptive μέλλω signals that Odysseus’ meeting

---

with the girls will not take place exactly as he intends; except for Nausicaa, they flee and only in 211ff. will the servants dare to converse with him.

138–40 The *‘all the others . . . but X (alone)’ motif makes clear that Nausicaa not only surpasses her servants in beauty but also in – god-given – courage; cf. the simile of 101–9.

141–7 An *‘indirect deliberation’ scene, in the ‘whether’ form. Since Odysseus is now in the presence of other people, his deliberation must take the form of thought (embedded focalization) rather than speech (a monologue). As a rule, the choice is between an emotional and a rational alternative; here Odysseus hesitates between a ‘complete’ supplication (including physical contact) and a ‘symbolic’ one (involving only a speech, spoken at a distance). As usual, the second alternative is chosen.

At the same time the passage provides the narratees with important information about the ensuing speech: Odysseus will use blandishing words and will ask for clothes and an escort to the city; cf. 148–85n. It also reveals that by now he has come to the conclusion that he is dealing with mortals after all (he expects the girl to bring him to the city); contrast 119–26, where he still considered the possibility that he was dealing with nymphs.

148–85 ‘Supplication’ speeches, which closely resemble *prayers, usually contain a reference to the speech-act of supplicating (ικένω, γούνομαι), a request, and a reason why the supplicandus should accept the request (a fact from the past and/or a future benefit); cf. 5.444–50; 7.146–52; 9.259–71; 13.226–35; 15.260–4, 272–8; 22.312–19, and 344–53.

Odysseus’ delicate circumstances require a very special speech. The narratees know that he wants to ask the girl for clothes and an escort to the city (cf. 144) and he makes his request near the end of his speech. All that goes before is aimed at persuading the girl to grant him, a naked stranger, this request, in other words, gaining her goodwill (through flattery), allaying her anxieties (through the insertion of positive information about himself), and arousing her pity (through allusions to his sorrows). Note that Odysseus does not throw in the weight of his fame by mentioning his name; cf. Introduction to 7. The elaborate nature of Odysseus’ speech stands out when we compare it with his short and formal ‘supplication’ speech to Arete in 7.146–52. The repeated use of deictic pronouns, τοιόντας, τοίν, and τοιοῦτον (157, 160, 162, 167), which suggest gestures, lends the speech an air of drama; cf. 1.156–318n.
The structure of the speech is as follows:

*(reference to supplication)* I come as a suppliant to you, lady (149a).

*(flattery)* Are you a god or a mortal?

If you are a god, I liken you to Artemis.

If you are a mortal, *(priamel)* *(foil)* three times fortunate are your father and mother, three times fortunate your brothers, *(climax)* but most fortunate will be your husband (149b–159).

For I have *never seen* a man or woman *like* you. I *stand in awe*.

I have *once seen* the sapling of a palm, *(self-promotion)* when I was in a temple on Delos, followed by many men, during the trip which ’was to bring me’ much sorrow.

*(Through his use of *proleptic μέλλω, which often has a fatalistic nuance, Odysseus increases the pathos of his words.)*

Just as I *stood in awe* before that sapling, for I had *never seen* a sapling *like that*,

*I now stand in awe* for you and do not dare to touch your knees (160–9a).

*(in thought, Odysseus had an altogether different reason not to touch her knees, viz. fear of angering her: 147)*

*(reason from the past)* Hard sorrow is on me. Yesterday I escaped the sea after twenty days and a god dropped me here, of course to have more sorrows (169b–174).

*(though he knows from Ino/Leucothea, 5.339–40, that it was Poseidon who caused the storm which made him land on Scheria, he uses the expressive *δείμων, with its connotation of bad luck, to increase the emotional appeal of his words)*

*(emotional prelude to request)* So, lady, have pity on me, for I came first to you as a suppliant and know no one in this country (175–7).

*(request)* Show me the city and give me some clothing (178–9).

*(reason from the future)* May the gods give you all you wish, a husband, a house and marital concord (180–5).

Whereas in 119–26 Odysseus was still puzzled as to whether he was dealing with mortals or immortals, he now has concluded that he is facing a mortal (cf. 141–7n.) and his hesitation in 149–59 about whether the girl is a god (cf. also his use of ἔνασσα, ‘lady’ in 149 and 175, a word reserved for goddesses) is feigned and part of his extensive flattery; cf. also the (unique) speech-introduction which announces that his speech will be not only μειλιχιόν, ‘blandishing’ (as Odysseus had decided in 143, 146), but also κερδολέον, ‘cunning’. 
Unaware that Athena has sent Nausicaa to the beach by referring to an impending marriage, Odysseus, too, speaks of the girl’s future husband (153–9 and 180–5). In his case, the ‘marriage’ topic is part of his flattery; cf. Introduction.

151–2 Odysseus compares Nausicaa with Artemis for the same reasons as the narrator in 101–9: her divine beauty and her virginity. This is the only time in Homer that narrator and character use the same comparison in connection with the same event/person; for narrator and characters using different comparisons on the same occasion, cf. II. 12.132–6 versus 167–72; 16.3–4 versus 7–11.

163–7 The comparison with the sapling of a palm suggests height (and hence beauty), youth, and preciousness; the same image is used by Thetis speaking of Achilles (II. 18.56 = 437), the narrator in a pathetic simile (II. 17.53–60), and Eumaeus talking about Telemachus (14.175). The comparison is prepared for by the metaphor ‘young shoot’, in 157; cf. 19.204–9n.

180–5 Lacking any resources, Odysseus can offer his Phaeacian benefactors only blessings, instead of the material rewards which suppliants or people praying commonly promise; cf. 7.148–50; 8.413–15; 13.44–46, and 61–2. The narratees may hear in his passionate plea for the ‘concord’ (δυναμόφροσύνη, δυναμόφρονέοντε) of man and wife a wish where Odysseus himself and Penelope are concerned.

186–210 Nausicaa accepts the supplication (186–97) and in a second speech (199–210) even orders her servants to give the stranger food and to bathe him (which he had not asked for). The device of *‘two subsequent speeches by one speaker’ emphatically marks Nausicaa’s change of addressee (in 198 she turns from the stranger to her servants) and topic (instead of talking to the stranger, she starts talking about him).

Nausicaa grants the stranger his request out of a sense of duty (193, 207–8), compassion (193: ‘unhappy’, and 206: ‘wretched’), and self-esteem (196–7, 200–5), which at this point borders on the condescending (cf. 208, where she puts him in the category of ‘strangers and beggars’). Later, after his beautification, other feelings will come into play; cf. 237–46 and 255–315nn.

In her first speech Nausicaa reacts to many of the points raised by ‘the stranger’:

---

18 Harder (1988).
Stranger, since you do not seem a bad or stupid man
– for it is Zeus who distributes happiness
over people, and he has given you these sorrows. Cf. 165, 169b–174
Since you have come to our city and land,
you will not lack clothes Cf. 178b
or anything else which a suppliant is entitled to.
I will show you the city Cf. 178a
and tell you the name of the people.
The Phaeacians are the inhabitants of this city and country. Cf. 177
I am the daughter of their king Alcinous. Cf. 149

Her second speech, which is no longer directed to ‘the stranger’ but to her
servants, nevertheless contains a piece of information about the
*Phaeacians which is meant to be heard by him (the device of indirect dia-
logue †): ‘that man will never be, who brings warfare to the Phaeacians. For
we are dear to the gods’; this incantation, aimed at quelling her servants’
(and her own) fears is also a warning to ‘the stranger’ (‘beware of harming
us, who are dear to the gods . . .’).

The narratees may note (i) the dramatic irony † of the young and inexpe-
rienced girl unwittingly telling πολύμιτις Odysseus that he does not seem
a stupid man and teaching πολύτας Odysseus to endure what the gods
give him;19 and (ii) the particular aptness of her calling ‘the stranger’, whom
they know to be Odysseus, ἐφησηνος (206; cf. 1.48–62n.).

196–7 For the emphatic initial position of εἰμι, cf. 9.19–20n.; it gives
expression to the princess’ proud self-esteem.

211–50 Nausicaa’s two orders, to give the stranger food and to wash him
(209–10) are executed in reverse order †: first the bath (211–46) and then,
after a repeated order (246), the food (247–50).

211–46 We are dealing with a very special instance of the *‘bathing’
type-scene with many adaptations and elaborations, due to the special cir-
cumstances:20 ‘skirmishing’ (211–23; see below); (ii) washing (224–7a;
whereas the description of washing usually takes up about one line (cf.
3.464; 4.48–9; 10.361–3; 17.87; 23.154; 24.366), we here find considerably
more detail, because Odysseus has to remove the brine (cf. 137)); (iii) anoint-
ing (227b); (iv) clothing (228); beautification by Athena (229–35; addition);

(vi) sitting down (236; the detail ‘after having moved away a little’ is important in view of Nausicaa’s ensuing confidential speech to her servants); gleaming (237a); admiration of Nausicaa (237b–246; the typical reaction to a beautification, here elaborated with a speech).

The servants obey Nausicaa’s orders to stand still and wash the stranger, but in modified form: they have to encourage each other (this detail reminds us that Odysseus is still frightening to look at), and, seating the stranger at the sheltered place, they put the clothes and oil next to him, and urge him to wash (and anoint) himself (instead of performing these chores themselves, as was customary; cf., e.g., 4.49). Guessing their embarrassment, Odysseus says that he will wash and anoint himself and asks them to stay at a distance. The girls move away and tell Nausicaa what the stranger said to them, thus excusing themselves. Odysseus refuses to be washed by the female servants, on the grounds that he does not want to appear naked before them. From the very beginning of his meeting with the girls, he had shown himself to be very much aware of his own nakedness: he had taken care to cover his genitals (129) and he had dropped the usual supplication gesture (141–7). What is involved in these passages is not so much Odysseus’ prudery as that of the girls, who are also frightened by his grimy appearance. He is afraid of shocking (or angering: 147) them and thereby forfeiting his chances of being helped. Later, in normal circumstances, he will allow himself to be bathed by female servants without comment (8.454). On Ithaca, he will again refuse a bath (by young servants), but for very different reasons; cf. 19.343–8n.

212–13 The *X acted as Y had ordered’ motif here perhaps suggests reluctance.

220 It is typical for the realism or ‘delight in physical existence’ of the Homeric epics21 that Odysseus’ joy at regaining the luxuries of a civilized existence is explicitly recorded: here (oil), 249–50 (food); 7.343 (a normal bed); and 8.450–1 (a warm bath).

229–35 A ‘beautification’ scene; cf. 2.12–13 = 17.63–4 (Telemachus); 8.17–20 and 23.156–62 (Odysseus); 10.395–6 (Odysseus’ companions who had been changed into pigs); 18.187–205 (Penelope); and 24.367–9 (Laertes). In all but one case the beautifying god is Athena, the treatment precedes an important performance, and the onlookers react with admiration. In the

21 Auerbach (1953: 13).
present passage one can hardly say that Odysseus is about to make an important appearance; he has already reached his goal and Nausicaa has promised him what he wants. His beautification here seems inserted to increase the tension: his metamorphosis will have a stunning effect on the girl, who starts considering the possibility of marriage with him.

232–5 The primary function of this simile † is ‘advertised’: Athena pours (κατέχευε) grace (χάριν and cf. χάρισι in 237) over Odysseus’ head and shoulders, just as a craftsman pours (περικεφέστα) silver over gold and thereby makes graceful (χαρίστα) objects. An extra link exists in Athena, ‘patroness’ of the craftsman, who herself functions as a kind of craftsman, when she beautifies Odysseus. A secondary function might be to underscore Odysseus’ return from wild nature (only a moment ago he was compared to a hungry lion, 130–6) to civilization.

233–4 An instance of the ‘gift of the gods’ motif; cf. 2.116–18n.

237–46 With the stranger sitting safely at some distance (cf. 236), Nausicaa expresses to her servants her new feelings for him, now that he has been washed and beautified. She picks up other points raised by him in his ‘supplication’ speech (148–85), but also modifies her own earlier statements (186–210):

Listen, maids, it must have been the will of the gods which brought this man here. Contrast 172 (‘some god has dropped me here’) and 206 (‘this man has come here while wandering’)

For earlier he seemed to me of mean appearance, but now I think he resembles the gods. Cf. 207–8 (‘we must take care of strangers and beggars’), Cf. 150–2 (‘if you are a god, I compare you to Artemis’)

If only a man like that could be called my husband, living here, and it would please him [the stranger] to stay here. Cf. 158–9 and 180–2 (Odysseus general remarks about Nausicaa’s marriage)

But (she calls herself to order) give the stranger food. Cf. 209

247–50 The execution of Nausicaa’s second order: the stranger is given a meal; cf. 211–50n. For the realism of Odysseus eating eagerly (again in
14.109–10), which the narrator here ‘excuses’ by adding that ‘he had not tasted food for a long time’; cf. 220n.

251 The *X thought of something else’ motif in the Odyssey usually has Athena as its subject; its use here in combination with Nausicaa indicates that by now the girl has become so engrossed in the role the goddess had assigned her that now she takes the initiative. The motif has its usual incisive force; the girl incites the stranger to stand up and follow her to the city.

255–315 Nausicaa’s long speech consists of three main parts: she starts giving shape to her promise in 194, setting out how she will escort the stranger to the palace of her father (255–61; note again an instance of dramatic irony †, Nausicaa telling πολυμήτις Odysseus that he ‘does not seem to her to be lacking in understanding’). Having reached the point where they enter the city, she trails off, moving from a description of the city to its inhabitants, to what these inhabitants might say when they see the stranger in her company, to her own secret desires (262–88). The repetition of the vocative (289: ξείνε) signals the return to her subject. Now she makes clear what had already been suggested by the temporal clauses in 259–62 (‘as long as . . . you can stay with me; but when we reach . . .’, sc. then you must continue alone): she wants the stranger to wait at the city-entrance until she has returned home and only then come to the palace (289–315). Nausicaa’s decision not to take the stranger with her to the palace is a deviation from the *stranger meets with local inhabitant’ story-pattern, and will be commented upon by Alcinous in 7.299–301. It allows for the splendid scene in which Odysseus suddenly appears in front of the surprised Phaeacians in 7.142–5 (narratorial motivation †) and psychologically is carefully prepared for by Nausicaa’s growing personal interest in the stranger, which makes her nervous to be seen in his presence (actorial motivation †).

262–85 Nausicaa provides Odysseus with more information about the *Phaeacians, which is partly positive (they are civilized, in that they have a walled city, a meeting-place, a temple, a harbour, and – most important of all for him – ships) and partly negative (they can be insolent). The narratees already know about the positive aspects (from 5.386 and 6.9–10) but not the negative one, and the tension increases for them as much as for Odysseus. For the Phaeacian ships, cf. 7.318–28n.

262–9 An instance of scenery † description, which – typically – is made by a character and tailored to the context (ships and agora will play a role in the ensuing story); cf. 7.43–5, where Odysseus will admire the same scenery.
The form of the description is a combination of spatial organization (περί: 262, ἐκότερος: 263) and a list, involving refrain-composition † (ἐνθά: 266 and 268).

266 | The first oblique reference to a deity who is going to play an important, indeed dramatic, role in the Phaeacian episode: Poseidon is (i) the natural patron of this seafaring people; more specifically (ii) the one who gave them their magical ships (7.35); and (iii) the progenitor of their royal family (7.56–68). He will punish the Phaeacians for escorting Odysseus home (13.125–87).

275–85 | This is surely the most spectacular potential tis-speech of the Homeric epics: an imaginary, future speech, in which a speaker ascribes what in fact are his/her own feelings to an anonymous ‘someone’ (τίς). In the Iliad we find eight of these speeches, in the Odyssey only two (here and 21.324–9). Safely hiding behind an anonymous Phaeacian, Nausicaa now dares to express to the stranger himself (cf. earlier to her servants: 239–45) how she feels about him and to respond to the flattery and self-promotion of his ‘supplication’ speech (148–85):

What attractive stranger is coming along with Nausicaa here? 

Where did she find him? Surely, he will be her husband.

Did she bring a stranger, who came from far on a ship, or is he a god, who came down in answer to her prayer? (ironic) It is better that she has found a husband from elsewhere. For she disregards the many noble Phaeacians who court her.

Cf. 160–9 (‘I have never seen someone as beautiful as you are’)  
Cf. 244–5 (‘if only such a man would be called my husband’)  
Cf. 149–55 (‘are you a god or a mortal?’)  
Cf. 164–5 (‘many men followed me’)

Athena’s trick, to lure Nausicaa to the beach under the pretence of her upcoming marriage, has been too successful: the girl has fallen in love with Odysseus; cf. Introduction.

This passage also broaches for the first time the issue of the stranger’s

22 Hentze (1905), de Jong (1987c), and Schneider (1996).
identity. However, Nausicaa is far too preoccupied with her own romantic feelings to press the point and ask the stranger for his name (a question which, having offered him food, she is entitled to ask). Soon this issue will gain centre stage; cf. Introduction to 7.

286–8 Nausicaa, struggling with her position as a ‘jeune fille rangée’, hides her erotic desire behind the ‘I/you too would criticize/fight another who . . .’ motif; cf. 15.69–71; Il. 6.329–30; and 23.494.23

289–315 In the last part of her speech Nausicaa leaves aside her own desires and shows herself concerned for what she guesses – Odysseus has not mentioned the subject – must be the stranger’s wish: ‘an escort home’ (289–90); cf. Introduction to 7. She gives him detailed instructions as to how to proceed, in what for the narratees is a *’table of contents’ speech: ‘wait in Athena’s grove at the city-entrance, until I have returned home’ (announcement of 321–7.13), ‘ask for Alcinous’ palace’ (7.14–81), ‘when you have entered the palace, go straight to my mother and supplicate her’ (7.82ff.). Her instructions concerning Arete will be repeated and complemented by Athena in 7.18–81n. Both speakers leave open the outcome of the procedure: ‘if you will please the queen, then you will return home . . .’ (313–15 = 7.75–8), which heightens the tension; another example of an open-ended prolepsis † is 11.110–13 = 12.137–40.

291–4 As is customary in the case of Homeric scenery †, the description of Athena’s grove is put into the mouth of a character; it is given by Nausicaa, who thereby allows the stranger to recognize the place where he has to stay behind. It combines a list (έν: 292, ἐνθα: 293) with a spatial organization (ἐκμι: 292). We are dealing with a locus amoenus (cf. 5.63–75n.): trees, water, and a meadow.

The *as far . . . as a voice shouting carries’ motif here is not contextually significant.

306 The expression θάυμα ἵκεσθαι, ‘a marvel to behold’, is typically used by mortal focalizers in connection with immortal persons or objects.24 Here Nausicaa uses it in connection with weavings by her mother Arete, who, just like all Phaeacians is ‘close to the gods’ (and cf. 7.71–2); cf. 7.45 (Odysseus marvels at the huge walls of the Phaeacians); 8.366 (the mortal singer Demodocus marvels at Aprodite’s lovely clothing); and 13.108 (the mortal narrator marvels at the weavings of the nymphs in Phorcys’ bay).

The journey home, compared with the journey out (81–4), stresses Nausicaa’s care in driving the mules, so as not to go too fast for those walking. The picture of Odysseus walking together with the servants is indicative of his situation; he is still a long way from regaining his status as Trojan hero and king of Ithaca.

For this description of sunset, cf. 1.423n.

Odysseus’ arrival at the sanctity of Athena naturally elicits an instance of the *‘prayer’ type-scene: (i) speech-introduction with verb of praying (323); (ii) invocation of the deity (324); (iii) claim to favour: whereas mortals usually refer to earlier benefits received from the deity, Odysseus here – uniquely – accuses the goddess of failing to help him on the occasions when he was shipwrecked by Poseidon (325–6; he is exaggerating. In fact, he has only once been shipwrecked by this god, in 5.279–493; his other shipwreck, after leaving the Island of Helius, 12.403–25, was caused by Zeus); (iv) request (327; ‘to come as one loved and pitied’ seems the typical desire of people about to make a supplication; cf. Priam in II. 24.309); (v) speech-capping, consisting of verb of praying and the deity’s response (328–31).

The narrator expands the last element with an explanation (for the narratees) of why Athena does not appear openly to Odysseus: she shrinks from a clash with Poseidon, who is her uncle and who is angry with Odysseus (for Poseidon’s wrath, cf. 1.19–21n.). Cf. Apollo, who declines to fight his uncle Poseidon in II. 21.468–9. The periphrastic denomination †πατροκλοσιγνήτων, ‘brother of her father’, instead of the proper name Poseidon, reflects Athena’s focalization (cf. 13.342: direct speech of Athena, and II. 21.469: embedded focalization by Apollo), and explains why she ‘is in awe of’ this god. The same circumspection explains why Athena only introduced the issue of Odysseus’ return when Poseidon was away with the Ethiopians (1.22–6n.), and started helping shipwrecked Odysseus only when Poseidon had left the scene (5.382–7n.). With ‘not yet’ the narrator also hints that at some point Athena will appear ‘openly’ to Odysseus (13.287ff.), on which occasion Odysseus will again raise the question of why she did not help him (13.316–19) and will finally receive an answer (13.339–43). Why does the narrator so emphatically call attention to Athena’s inactivity during Odysseus’ Wanderings?\(^{25}\) He saw himself confronted with the tradition of Athena’s wrath against the Greeks returning home from Troy (cf. 1.325–7n.), which sits ill with his own desire to push

---

Athena forward as Odysseus’ steady helper in the Odyssey. He therefore plays down her wrath by making other gods (Poseidon, Zeus) execute it, and transforming it into a non-intervention tactic out of respect for Poseidon.
BOOK SEVEN

Book 7 contains the evening of the thirty-second day of the Odyssey (cf. Appendix A), which brings Odysseus’ meeting with the Phaeacian nobles and the royal couple Alcinous and Arete. The structure of the meeting is determined largely by the (overnight) *visit* type-scene: Odysseus (i) sets off (14–45; expanded with an encounter with Athena); (ii) arrives at the palace (46–135; expanded with a detailed description of the palace); (iii) finds the Phaeacian nobles, Alcinous, and Arete (136–8); (iv) is received (139–71; here the reception takes the special form of a supplication); (v) is given a meal (172–83); (vi) a conversation ensues (doubled: 184–227 and 228–334); (viii) a bed is prepared for the guest (335–47). This will be followed later by the elements of (vii) a bath (8.433–69n.) and (ix) guest-gifts (8.389–93n.).

The element of (x) the escort to the next destination (*pompe*) occupies a central place in this visit. Bringing Odysseus to Ithaca is the main function of the Phaeacians (cf. 5.37), and the subject is touched upon repeatedly: the escort home is brought up for the first time by Nausicaa (6.289–315), officially placed on the agenda by Odysseus in 7.151–2 (and cf. 222–5), promised by Alcinous in 189–96, applauded by the Phaeacian nobles in 226–7, reconfirmed by Alcinous in 317–28, publicly announced by Alcinous in 8.26–40, reconfirmed again by Alcinous in 8.545 and 556, delayed in 11.328–84, and reconfirmed again just before its execution in 13.39–56.

A considerable time passes before Odysseus reveals his name to the Phaeacians. Thus the *‘identification of the guest’ ritual takes the form of a delayed recognition (see below). Nausicaa had not asked him for his name, though she did give him a meal and was therefore entitled to do so (cf. 6.275–85n.). Alcinous inquires about it indirectly (199–206), Arete directly (238–9), but both times Odysseus manages to avoid giving it. In 8.28–9
Alcinous recalls that he still does not know the stranger’s name. Twice the stranger weeps when he hears Demodocus singing about Odysseus, and twice he tries to hide his tears, which are nevertheless noticed by Alcinous (8.83–95, 521–34). The second time curiosity overcomes politeness and Alcinous asks the stranger pointedly for his name (8.550–86). Odysseus now finally reveals who he is (9.19–20). The way in which Odysseus’ tears eventually lead to his identification resembles Telemachus’ identification in Sparta; cf. Introduction to 4.

Nowhere does the narrator explain the reason for Odysseus’ reticence; this is one of the more intriguing instances of ellipsis † in the Odyssey, one which, understandably, has spawned much scholarly discussion. ¹ The narratorial motivation † is evident: it provides the narrator with an opportunity to use his favourite *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern. We have instances of (i) talk about the unrecognized stranger in his presence (in the form of Demodocus’ two Trojan songs), (ii) the test, when Odysseus is challenged to participate in the games (cf. 8.23: ἐπειρήσαντ’), and (iv) self-identification, which does not lead to the usual scepticism, but instead is immediately backed up by Odysseus’ extended travel story. Regarding the actorial motivation †, which – unusually – remains implicit, we can only guess. An important clue to understanding Odysseus’ reluctance to mention his name is his refusal in 8.152–7 to participate in the athletic games. Both acts are untypical of a Homeric hero; as a rule they are proud of their name and eager to show their strength. Odysseus’ experiences in the past ten years have undermined his heroic self-confidence and drained his energy. All he wants now is to be left in peace and to be brought home; after that he is prepared to die (224–5). Revealing his name would also mean telling the long and painful story of his adventures, something which at first he does not feel up to and which he fears might spoil the festive meal; cf. 241–2, 297; 9.3–15 (and 19.116–22, where ‘the beggar’/Odysseus refuses to tell Penelope his name and fatherland, on the grounds that his endless tale of woe will fill him with sorrows and might annoy her and her maids). It is only after he has been reconfirmed in his physical strength and heroic pride that Odysseus can muster the energy to recount, and hence relive, his sorrowful adventures. Judging by the fact that he does so at great length,

the narratees may conclude that at this stage he is beginning to enjoy recalling the past, which also contains many examples of his famous endurance and intelligence.

While Odysseus conceals his name for quite some time, he does drop hints about his person:2 in 6.164–5 he reveals to Nausicaa that he once was the commander of an army; in 7.225, 249 he indicates that he is a man of substance; in 7.244–96 he relates one of his adventures; in 8.179–85 and 216–18 he states that he is an athlete (and hence an aristocrat); in 8.183, 219–20, 489–91 he reveals that he is a Greek and has intimate knowledge of the Trojan War.

1–13 In 6.295–9 Nausicaa instructed Odysseus to wait in Athena’s grove until he reckoned that she had reached home. In characteristic Homeric fashion, the time Odysseus has to wait is covered by another scene (fill-in technique †), viz. Nausicaa’s return home, i.e., the very event which Odysseus is waiting for!

The changes of scene †, from Odysseus to Nausicaa (1–2) and back to Odysseus again (14), are abrupt. In 1–2 it takes the form of μέν-δέ clauses, whereby the μέν-clause contains an appositive summary †.

4–6 Now that the climax of Nausicaa’s appearance, the meeting with Odysseus, is behind us, the narrator rushes through the *‘arrival by car’ type-scene: (i) standing still (4a); (ii) unharnessing (4b–5a); and unloading the luggage (5b). Contrast the lavish ‘departure’ scene in 6.71–84. It is a touching detail that these chores are performed by Nausicaa’s brothers instead of servants.

7–13 The girl being fondly cared for by her nurse Eurymedusa resembles 1.428–44, where Euryclea puts Telemachus to bed, after his performance; cf. 6.15–19n.

Eurymedusa is introduced in a passage of explicit characterization †, which is marked off by ring-composition † (δοε...οι τῷ...οι τῷ ἀνέκοι). This character plays a role only here. In fact, the passage tells us more about *Alcinous, who is ‘plugged’ (the people ‘listened to him as to a god’; cf. 6.12) just prior to the moment he actively enters the story.

*Nausicaa’s plot role finishes here; she has provided Odysseus with clothes and shown him the way to the city. She will make a brief, but moving, reappearance in 8.457–68.

14–143 Mist sent by the gods3 (i) covers the eyes of heroes, thus blinding them (Il. 20.321–2, removal of mist in 341–2; removal, which enhances vision: 15.668–70), (ii) envelops heroes, gods, or objects, and thereby makes them invisible (Il. 3.381; 5.185–6, 344–5, 356, 776; 8.50; 11.752; 14.282, 350–1; 20.444; 21.549, 597), and (iii) covers the battlefield (Il. 17.268–73, 366–76, 643–50; 21.6–7) or the Ithacan scenery (13.189–352) and thereby hinders attacking warriors or prevents Odysseus from recognizing his homeland. Here Athena pours a mist around Odysseus, making him invisible as he walks through the city and palace, until he stands in front of the royal couple (14–15, 41–2, 140). Her motive is revealed in embedded focalization †: ‘out of fear that the Phaeacians would sneer at him and would ask him who he was’ (16–17); she repeats it to Odysseus in 31–3. It appears from 39–40 that her ruse has been successful: none of the Phaeacians notice him. The motif of the mist serves to increase the tension: apparently the Phaeacians are sufficiently threatening for Athena to take precautions; cf. Introduction to 6. Odysseus’ invisibility also adds to the dramatic effect of his sudden night-time appearance amidst the Phaeacian nobles and royal couple.

18–81 Athena’s escort of Odysseus to the palace is an instance of a *‘god meets with mortal’ scene, which here takes the specific form of the *‘stranger meets with local inhabitant’ story-pattern: Athena adopts the guise of a Phaeacian girl, the daughter not of the king (this was of course impossible, given the existence of Nausicaa) but of his neighbour, and leads Odysseus to Alcinous’ palace (a service which Nausicaa, for personal reasons, had declined; cf. 6.255–315n.). Athena nowhere reveals her true identity nor is she recognized by Odysseus. In retrospect, however, he will see through her disguise (cf. 13.322–3n.).

The scene, in its bare outline, has been prepared for by Nausicaa in 6.298–301, where she told Odysseus to ask for Alcinous’ palace and assured him that ‘even a little child’ could show him the way. In fact, Athena does much more than show Odysseus the way: she, too, informs him about the Phaeacians and their queen, and encourages him. The scene forms an anticipatory doublet † of the encounter between Athena and Odysseus in Book 13, which likewise takes the form of a combined ‘god meets mortal’ scene and ‘stranger meets with local inhabitant’ story-pattern, and where

likewise Athena instructs Odysseus on how to approach the inhabitants of the palace.

Odysseus asks ‘the girl’ to lead him to Alcinous’ palace, backing up his request by pointing out that he is a sorely tried stranger, who has come ‘from far’ and knows no one among the inhabitants (22–6). In her answer (27–36) ‘the Phaeacian girl’/Athena offers to lead him (‘catch-word’ technique †: her ἡγεμονεύσω picks up ἡγήσατο in 22), but warns him that the *Phaeacians do not like people from elsewhere (her ‘from elsewhere’ picks up Odysseus’ ‘from far’ in 25) and might ask him offensive questions (she reiterates what Nausicaa had said in 6.273–85). At the same time, Athena holds out a carrot to Odysseus – the fact that they are in possession of very fast ships (again she reiterates Nausicaa: 6.270–2). At the moment they arrive at the palace Athena takes her leave with a second speech (46–77), in which she tells her protégé that to be courageous is best, even if someone comes ‘from far’, gives him instructions on how to proceed (she repeats Nausicaa’s instructions in 6.303–15; adds that he will find the Phaeacian nobles dining in the palace, a seed † which prepares for the intervention of Echeneus in 155–66) and, above all, provides him with information about his supplicandus, queen Arete.

18 The use of *interruptive μέλλω (18) underscores Athena’s careful timing; she meets him as he is about to enter the city.

34–6 For the Phaeacian magical ships, cf. 318–28n.

43–5 The scenery †, the city of the Phaeacians, is focalized admiringly by Odysseus. The passage is marked off by ring-composition †: θαύμαζεν . . . θαῦμα ἱδέσθαι. His focalization mirrors Nausicaa’s description of 6.262–9: λιμένας≈λιμήν, νῆας≈νήες, ἀγοράς≈ἀγορή, τείχεα . . . ύψηλά≈πύργος ύψηλός. The passage is a prelude to his long – again admiring – focalization of Alcinous’ palace and garden (82–133). Strictly speaking, both instances of focalization are illogical, since the sun has set in 6.321 and it is therefore dark. When Telemachus arrives at and admires Menelaus’ palace, it is also night. There, however, only the interior of the palace is described (4.44–6), which of course is visible even at night. The description which Odysseus gives of Goat-Island in 9.116–41, when he arrives there on a moonless night, can be explained as ex eventu knowledge.

For θαύμα ἱδέσθαι, ‘a marvel to behold’, cf. 6.306n.

54–74 The chunk of explicit characterization † of Arete which Athena provides informs Odysseus about the queen’s name and parentage (which
he will use in 146) and her honoured position, both in the palace and in the city, because of her just and noble mind. The esteem in which she is held explains why Odysseus is to address his supplication to her (actorial motivation †); it is confirmed in 8.442–8. The narratorial motivation † of her role as supplicandus is that she is to prefigure Penelope as the mighty queen whom Odysseus has to win over; cf. Introduction to 6.

Athena also gives Arete’s genealogy, in the form of an epic regression †:

C Arete and Alcinous have the same (grand)parents (54–5):
B Nausithous, who was born of Poseidon and Periboea, daughter of Eurymedon (56–8),
A who destroyed his own people, the Giants, and died violently (59–60).
B’ Poseidon begets Nausithous with Periboea (61–2),
C’ who begets Rhe xenor and Alcinous; Rhe xenor dies, leaving behind one child, Arete, whom Alcinous marries (63–6).

Genealogies in Homer usually occur in speeches and serve an argumentative function (to enhance the status of a person): here ‘the girl’/Athena marks the importance of the woman whom Odysseus has to win over; in 15.225–55 (the only occasion where the genealogy derives from the narrator) it serves to lend status to the seer Theoclymenus); in Il. 6.152–211 Glaucus answers Diomedes’ question about his identity, but at the same time tries to impress him; in 14.110–27 young Diomedes legitimizes his speaking and advising in the council; in 20.213–41 Aeneas tries to face down Achilles before a duel; in 21.187–91 Achilles lends grandeur to his slaying of an opponent. The genealogical catalogue of heroines in 11.225–327n. is a special case.

78–81 As usual, the departure of a god from the scene is described explicitly; cf. 6.41–7n. The – unique – details given here (i) emphasize Athena’s removal from the scene (from now on Odysseus is on his own again and he will have to handle the task of winning over the Phaeacian queen all by himself) and (ii) suggest a contrast between Athena returning to Marathon, Athens, and the palace of Erechtheus (in other words, places which she knows well and where she is sure to be received honourably) and Odysseus entering the palace of Alcinous and Arete (whom he does not know, and whose honourable reception is not a foregone conclusion).

81–135 As a rule, arriving visitors wait at the door until they are invited
in. Here Odysseus has been instructed to enter on his own accord, but nevertheless he pauses to take in the sight of Alcinous’ palace. The retardation †, caused by the detailed ‘scenery’ description, adds weight to the moment when Odysseus steps over the *threshold (83, 135) and enters the realm of the Phaeacians; cf. 13.63, where, at the moment of his departure, his stepping over the threshold is recorded again. Odysseus’ admiration for his host’s habitat is one of the structural similarities to Telemachus’ visit to Menelaus’ palace; cf. Introduction to 6.

The scenery †, Alcinous’ palace and garden,4 is focalized by Odysseus; cf. ‘his heart pondered’ (82–3), ‘he admired . . . when his mind was done with all admiration’ (133–4), and the past tenses (86, 88, etc.; cf. 5.63–75n.). This is both Homeric practice and an effective means of suggesting the unsurpassed splendour of the Phaeacian king’s domicile, which makes even an experienced traveller like Odysseus stand in awe. In point of fact, the omniscient narrator intrudes to a considerable extent upon Odysseus’ focalization, providing all kinds of information which exceeds the perception or knowledge of the hero (paralepsis †):5 in 92 we are informed that the gold and silver watchdogs were made by Hephaestus; from 95 onwards we are given a description of the interior of the palace, including the customs, tasks and qualities of the Phaeacians (note the iterative εἰςκοίνον); and from 112 onwards we get a complete description of Alcinous’ garden throughout the year. The narrator’s intrusion is underscored by the use of the present tense instead of the past in 104–30; only at the end, shortly before Odysseus’ activity as focalizer is mentioned again, does the narrator return to the past tense (131). The use of the present tense also suggests the divine nature of the palace and garden; cf. 6.41–7n.

The form of the description † is a combination of a spatial organization (we move from the entrance to the court to the interior of the palace to the garden outside the court) and a list, marked by refrain-composition † (ἐν: 95, 129 and ἐνθάνατο: 114, 122, 127). Alcinous’ garden displays the features of a typical locus amoenus: trees (114–16), breeze (118–19), and water (129–31). The *‘description by negation’ technique in 117–19, here in the form of a priamel (*never does the fruit on these trees rot, *never does it give out, neither in winter nor in summer, but always the west wind brings some to grow, and

---

ripens others’), points up the miraculous, paradise like, nature of Alcinous’ orchard.

The ‘scenery’ description further fills in the characterization of the *Phaeacians. They are a seafaring nation (108–9) and lead a semi-divine life: the palace, including watchdogs and torch-bearers, is made of precious metals (cf. Poseidon’s golden palace in *Il.* 13.21–2 and Hephaestus’ golden robots in 18.417–21); a miraculous orchard provides them with a permanent harvest of fruit, apparently without any labour on their part (compare the effortless agriculture of the Cyclopes and contrast Laertes in 24.226–31); and they are continually feasting (99; cf. 8.248–9). Their closeness to the gods is also indicated by the fact that it was Hephaestus who made Alcinous’ golden and silver watchdogs and that Alcinous’ garden was a gift of the gods.

91–4 The first instance of the ‘watchdog’ motif. In several places in the *Odyssey* we hear about watchdogs at the moment of a visitor’s arrival, and each time this is designed to bring about a specific effect: there are Circe’s enchanted watchdogs, symbolizing her world of sorcery (10.212–19); Eumaeus’ watchdogs, who bark at Odysseus (14.29–36), fawn on Telemachus (16.4–5), and whimper at the sight of Athena (16.162–3); and of course Odysseus’ watchdog Argus (17.291–327), who symbolizes the loyal part of Odysseus’ *oikos*. A comparison with these passages points up an important aspect of the Phaeacians: Alcinous’ dogs are ‘immortal and ageless’ (unlike Argus, who ages and dies), but in exchange for this they have turned into works of art, ornaments rather than real watchdogs (who bark, fawn, and whimper). Thus they symbolize the Phaeacian way of life: luxurious, but without dynamism, danger, or potential.

139–347 This passage presents one of the most spectacular instances of misdirection †, which takes the form of the ‘interruption’ technique †. Everything starts off exactly as predicted by Nausicaa and Athena: Odysseus finds the Phaeacian nobles gathered in the *megaron*; however, they are no longer eating, but have already begun their libations before retiring to bed (this indication of time prepares for the effect which Odysseus’ sudden appearance is to have on them); he proceeds further, finds Arete and Alcinous, and supplicates Arete. But then, though the narratees

---

have been emphatically prepared for her role as *supplicandus* (cf. 46–77n.), it is a Phaeacian elder who reacts first, and Alcinous who accepts the supplication. Soon the other Phaeacian nobles, also, show their approval of ‘the stranger’ (226–7). Only after a considerable interval, when the other Phaeacians have left, does Arete react to the arrival of the stranger by asking him a question, which seems to endanger everything he has secured so far (233–9n.). When Odysseus has replied, it is again Alcinous who reacts; the narratees are only implicitly informed of Arete’s approving reaction, when she orders her servants to prepare a bed for the stranger (335–45) and gives him guest-gifts (8.438–45). In 11.336–41 she will finally confirm her acceptance of him explicitly, calling him ‘my guest’ and taking the initiative in providing him with more guest-gifts. Her special position is reflected in the fact that Odysseus speaks separate words of farewell to her (13.56–62).

139–206 The Homeric epics contain many ‘supplication’ scenes: a person begs for his life (9.257–93; 14.276–80; 22.310–29, 330–80) or a stranger, once a fugitive, appeals for aid (here; 5.444–53; 6.127–97; 13.226–35; 15.223–83). Supplications are not type-scenes, but since they involve a highly formalized ritual, a basic structure is observable. First there is the suppliant’s (i) approach; (ii) gesture, consisting of lowering the body (sitting, crouching, kneeling) and touching part of the body of the *supplicandus* (knees, hands, chin); and (iii) ‘supplication’ speech. This is then followed by (iv) the *supplicandus*’ reaction, which in the case of acceptance, consists of raising the suppliant, and in the case of rejection, breaking off the physical contact; and usually (v) a speech. Often the ritual part is absent and we find no more than a ‘supplication’ speech as the vehicle of an urgent request, followed by a reaction (e.g., 9.257–78). In the present case, we find (i) Odysseus’ approach (139–41); and (ii) his gesture, consisting of throwing his arms around Arete’s knees (142). Wedged in between his ‘supplication’ gesture and speech, the narrator records the ‘amazed’ reaction of the Phaeacians at his sudden appearance (143–5); the effect is heightened by the mist (cf. 14–143n.) and the late hour (cf. 136–8n.). For other amazed reactions to visitors, cf. 10.63 (the Aeolians, having provided Odysseus with the bag of winds, did not expect to see him again); *II*. 9.193 (Achilles, having withdrawn from the fight and the company of his comrades, had not expected to see Odysseus, Ajax and Phoenix); and 24.483–4 (Achilles never expected to

see the aged Trojan king Priam in his barrack). Odysseus enhances the impact of (iii) his ‘supplication’ speech (146–52) by seating himself in the ashes of the hearth (153–4). The position symbolizes the humble and dependent situation he finds himself in; cf. Laertes, who in the winter sleeps in the ashes next to the fire together with the servants (11.190–1). (iv) The reaction to Odysseus’ supplication comprises three stages: first there is a long silence (154), which is much more pregnant than the first silence in 144, since Odysseus’ words demand a reaction; there is only one other instance of silence after a supplication (II. 1.511–12). Odysseus (and with him the narratees) hold their breath: is his appeal going to be rejected? Arete’s silence is not mentioned explicitly but subsumed in the general silence. Then the aged counsellor Echeneus intervenes and ‘prompts’ Alcinous, telling him what to do (155–66): he must raise the suppliant and give him a seat (i.e., perform the prescribed ritual of acceptance), make a libation to Zeus, who protects suppliants, and give the stranger a meal. He does not react to the stranger’s actual request (an escort home); obviously this is for the king to decide. Finally, Alcinous reacts; he raises Odysseus from the hearth and gives him a seat (167–71), offers him a meal (172–7), makes a libation (178–84), and also (v) delivers a speech (186–206). Alcinous’ hesitant reaction is due to his surprise at Odysseus’ sudden appearance (cf. 143–5), but may also be intended to illustrate the isolation of the Phaeacians; they are not used to receiving guests and their hospitality has become a bit ‘rusty’ (cf. Introduction to 6).

The characterization † of Alcinous is implicit, except for two brief explicit plugs by the narrator (6.12; 7.11). He is sensitive (he discerns his daughter’s unexpressed wish for marriage: 6.67, and reacts with tact to the tears of his guest: 8.93–103, 532–43); proud of his people (8.102–3, 253–5); after an initial hesitation, a friendly and generous host (he organizes a feast in honour of his guest: 8.40ff., gives him a precious guest-gift: 8.430–1, and provides him with a new ship: 8.35 and the best crew: 8.36); impressionable, which is not the same as naive8 (after Odysseus’ first narrative, he offers him his daughter: 311–15, and halfway through his *Apologue*, compares him to a professional singer: 11.363–9).

146–52 Odysseus’ *supplication* speech contains the usual elements: reference to the speech-act of supplicating (146–7; the information Odysseus obtained from ‘the girl’/Athena in 54–66 allows him to address

---

8 Naive: scholion ad 7.313.
the queen formally, mentioning her name and the name of her father), the reason why the supplicandus should accept the request (148–50; once again, cf. 6.180–5n., Odysseus has to have recourse to a general wish for his addressees’ benefit), and the request (151–2). It is typical of Odysseus’ present state of mind that he does not use his status (as Odysseus, king of Ithaca and Trojan hero) to back up his request, but only his long anonymous suffering (147 and 152); cf. Introduction. It is important to observe that, although Odysseus addresses Arete, his appeal is directed to all those present (‘I have come to your husband and to your knees, and to these feasters’) and that his request for a conveyance is in the plural form. Thus when it is the counsellor Echeneus and later Alcinous who react to Odysseus’ appeal rather than Arete, this is, at least formally, not illogical.

156–8 The intervention of the minor character Echeneus is prepared for by the narrator by a chunk of explicit characterization † (156–7) and the commending speech-introduction 158 (cf. 2.157–160n.). The information provided is tailored to the context: his advanced age and excellence as an adviser explain why he alone dares to address and criticize the king, and is able to give wise advice. Old age is regularly associated with wisdom in the Homeric epics; cf. 2.16; II. 4.322–3; 13.355; 19.217–19; and 21.440.9 Echeneus will play a role again in 11.342–6.

169–71 Alcinous seats Odysseus next to himself, the usual place of honour for guests; a significant *seating arrangement. What gives this gesture additional force, however, is the fact that he makes his own son stand up and offer his seat to the stranger; cf. II. 24.100, where Athena yields her place next to Zeus to Thetis. From now on Alcinous will show himself to be a perfect host.

The character Laodamas is here fleetingly introduced by the narrator: he is a kind person and Alcinous’ favourite. He will play an important, though not entirely positive, role in the games (8.132ff.) and will perform as a dancer (8.370–80).

172–7 An instance of the *‘festive meal’ type-scene: (i) preparations (172–4); (ii) serving of food (175–6); (iii) consumption (177; Odysseus is the only one eating). This is not followed by the usual (iv) conclusion; as is clear from 215, Odysseus continues eating during the libation and Alcinous’ speech.

An instance of the *(collective) ‘libation’ type-scene: (i) proposal, in which the purpose of the libation is indicated (178–81); (iii) preparations (182–3); and (v) closing formula (184). Libations are regularly made at the moment of arrival; here the Phaeacians were actually already in the middle of a libation to Hermes, prior to retiring to bed (137–8).

Alcinous’ speech, in which he reacts to Odysseus’ supplication, consists of two parts: (A) proposal concerning the stranger’s escort (186–98) and (B) speculation about his identity (199–206). Ad A: his formulation (‘let us consider his escort, how the stranger will come home safely’) indicates that he has already decided to comply with the stranger’s request of 151–2; cf. Introduction. Like Nausicaa in 6.187–97, he acts out of pity for this unhappy stranger. Picking up Odysseus’ remark in 152 (‘long now I suffer sorrows’), he guarantees that at least his escort home will be without sorrows (for this claim, cf. 318–28n.); what awaits him at home lies in the hands of fate (Alcinous speaks in general terms about what fate may have in store for the stranger when he arrives home; the narratees know that it is the Suitors whom he will find there). Ad B: again like Nausicaa (in 6.243, 280–1), Alcinous considers the possibility that the stranger is one of the gods, who normally would not appear openly to the *Phaeacians. His speculation in fact invites the stranger to reveal who he is. Thus, though he addresses the Phaeacian nobles and speaks about the stranger in the third person, it is clear that his words are intended to be heard by the stranger too (who indeed will react, though he does not tell them his name); an instance of indirect dialogue †. The long ‘struggle’ for Odysseus’ name has begun; cf. Introduction.

This part of Alcinous’ speech is also a *table of contents’ speech, setting out the structure of what is to come: he proposes now to retire to bed (188; cf. 229), tomorrow first to entertain the guest (189–91a; cf. 8.55ff.) and then to consider the particulars of his escort home (191b–196; cf. 8.1–54).

For the visibility/recognizability of the gods, cf. 13.312–13n.

In his answer Odysseus takes up Alcinous’ two points in reverse order †. (B’) Alcinous’ suggestion that he might be a god triggers a bitter reaction: far from being a god he is the most wretched of all mortals. At the point where one might expect him to reveal his identity, he pleads to be left in peace and turns to a diatribe on the needs of the belly (208–21). For

Odysseus’ reticence concerning his name, cf. Introduction. (A’) He ends his speech by repeating (cf. 151–2) his request for an escort home (222–5). He now inserts the detail ‘at dawn’ (222), which he derives from Alcinous’ speech (189).

213–14 Odysseus’ suggestion that he could tell them many more stories about all the misery he has suffered through the gods not only forms part of his sustained effort to arouse the Phaeacians’ pity, but at the same time creates expectations concerning him as a story-teller; cf. 241–3n.

215–21 An instance of the ‘accursed belly’ motif, for which cf. (voiced by Odysseus) 15.343–5; 17.286–9, 473–4; 18.53–4, 380; (briefly voiced by others) 6.133–4; 17.228; and 18.364. The belly is viewed negatively (cf. στυγερή, λυγρή, ούλομένη, κακεργώς) in that it forces a man, once an animal, to undertake dangerous or unpleasant actions. Twice it is viewed negatively in a different way, viz. as ‘insatiable’ (by Melantheus and Eurymachus taunting ‘the beggar’: 17.228; 18.364). The frequent association of the motif with Odysseus is due in part to his masquerade as a beggar in the second half of the Odyssey, but it also characterizes him as a man who has acquired a broader view of the world than the heroic one of the heroes in the Iliad, who never talk about their bellies (except once: Odysseus (!) in 19.155–72); by the time he returns to Ithaca, Odysseus has become painfully familiar with the phenomenon of hunger (and its dangerous effects: cf. 9.44–6, the feasting in the country of the Ciconians, and esp. 12.325–98, the eating of Helius’ cattle). In the present context, the emphasis which Odysseus places on his hunger, which in fact after 6.249 cannot be so enormous, has a double rhetorical function: to divert attention from the question of his identity and to stress once again his sorrow (‘a belly urges a man to eat, even when he has a great deal of sorrow; just as I, having a great deal of sorrow, am urged by my belly to eat’).

224–5 Odysseus’ desire to return home here is specified in terms of his longing to return to his oikos, in reaction to Alcinous’ words in 196–8; cf. 1.13n.

229–347 Line 229 usually heralds a *‘retiring for the night’ type-scene. Here the scene is interrupted after its first element (the others go home), only to be continued in 334–47. In between, we find a private scene between Odysseus, Alcinous, and Arete, which had not been prepared for before-

hand (e.g., in Alcinous’ ‘table of contents’ speech in 186–206). A similar split-up version of this type-scene envelops the night-time conversation between ‘the beggar’ and Penelope; cf. 18.428n.

The scene in which Odysseus talks privately with the queen (and king) of the palace after the others have gone to bed is one of the structural similarities between Scheria and Ithaca; cf. Introduction to 6. In particular, there is the similarity of the queen asking the stranger who he is (237–8a = 19.104–5a), the latter ducking the question (here) or giving a false answer (19.172–81).12

233–9 The sense of security which had been built up in the preceding scene is disrupted when Arete starts a new conversation, finally breaking her long silence from line 153 onwards.13 The whole successful interaction between Odysseus and the Phaeacian males is suddenly reduced to a mere interlude; cf. 139–347n. Now the woman speaks who, according to Nausicaa and Athena, is to decide Odysseus’ fate. The delay lends her reaction all the more weight: will she be as positively disposed as Alcinous? Will Odysseus lose what he has just achieved, the promise of an escort home?

The embedded focalization † preceding her speech, ‘she had recognized the clothing he was wearing’ (234–5), explains by implication her long silence: knowing that he can only have acquired the clothes through her own daughter Nausicaa, she has waited until the other Phaeacians have gone before bringing up this delicate matter. We are dealing here with an exceptional and highly effective combination of the *‘action-perception-reaction’ pattern and the ‘belated reaction presentation’ device (cf. 16.190–1n.): the action of Odysseus entering in Phaeacian clothes (144–5) is separated from – the presentation of – Arete’s perception (234–5) and reaction (237–9); only now does it become clear that all the time Arete must have been entertaining anxious thoughts in her head.

For the second time this evening, but now directly, Odysseus is asked for his name; cf. Introduction. The usual formula ‘What man are you, and whence? Where is your city? Your parents?’, is varied by the queen, who asks questions which for her are more important: (A) ‘What man are you, and whence? (B) And who was it gave who you this clothing? (C) Do you not claim to have come here as wanderer over the sea? (which makes it all

the more surprising that you should wear these clothes)\textsuperscript{14}. Thus the identification ritual, normally an expression of politeness, takes on a menacing quality: what has taken place between the stranger and her daughter? Just as Nausicaa had mentioned – and rejected – the possibility of a girl ‘mixing with men before being formally married’, the same thought now seems to cross her mother’s mind, and Odysseus sees himself confronted with a sudden, threatening re-emergence of the topic of marriage; cf. Introduction to 6.

240–97 In his answer Odysseus shrewdly exploits the Homeric custom of answering in reverse order\textsuperscript{†}: he gives such a lengthy answer to the questions C, how he arrived on Scheria (244–88), and B, who gave him the clothes (289–96), that the queen’s first question A, who he is, remains unanswered; an instance of the *‘distraction’ device. Nonetheless, though he does not mention his name or home-city, he continues the process of gradual disclosure, telling a true story rather than one of his lying tales. His narrative shows him to be a man of substance who once owned a ship, and an interesting man, whom a goddess desired as her partner; cf. Introduction.

Odysseus’ narrative is a mirror-story\textsuperscript{†}, more specifically a repeating analepsis\textsuperscript{†}; he recounts events that have already been narrated elsewhere:

\begin{align*}
244–66 & \text{ Calypso} & \text{ Cf. 5.130–6 (Calypso speaking) + } & 5.149–224, 263–77 \text{ (narrator)} \\
267–88 & \text{ storm and arrival on Scheria} & \text{ Cf. 5.278–493 (narrator)} \\
289–96 & \text{ Nausicaa} & \text{ Cf. 6.110–250 (narrator)}
\end{align*}

While the information Odysseus provides is new to Arete and Alcinous, it is not new to the narratees; for the latter, this passage is interesting above all for the correspondences and differences between the earlier version and Odysseus’ account. The correspondences are partly \textit{verbatim}: 249–51 = 254\textsuperscript{a}–51 = 5.131–3, 256 = 5.135, 257 = 5.136, 266 = 5.268, 267–8 = 5.278–9, 281–2 = 5.442–3; these \textit{verbatim} repetitions indicate the points where Odysseus shares the focalization of Calypso and the narrator. The differences are due largely to three factors: Odysseus’ (i) subjective focalization (he is the one who underwent the events recounted); (ii) restricted knowledge (as

\textsuperscript{14} Webber (1989) and Krischer (1989).
opposed to the omniscience of the narrator); and (iii) rhetoric (his narrative is intended to allay Arete’s suspicions). Ad (i): Odysseus’ preliminary remark (241–3) immediately sets the tone; what follows is a story of woe. This is reflected in his frequent use of emotional character-language †:

*δύστηνος, ‘unhappy’ (248); νυξ μέλαινη, ‘dark night’ (253; this combination occurs nine times out of a total of twelve instances in speech); *δύσμορος, ‘unlucky’ (270); *δίζως, ‘misery’ (270); άθεσφάτος, ‘unspeakable’ (273; twice in simple narrator-text, both times in similes, and six times in direct speech); ατερπ-, ‘joyless’ (279; four times in direct speech, once in embedded focalization: Il. 19.354); οππον... άπεξαρνα, ‘an endless sleep’ (286; whereas the narrator had spoken only of ‘sleep’ in 5.492 and 6.2, Odysseus coins a unique combination to indicate how he experienced that sleep15); άμβροσίη νυξ, ‘divine night’ (283; this combination occurs nine times in speech and embedded focalization). Next, he uses the pathetic devices of the ‘if not’ situation † (278–80; he telescopes into one ‘if not’ situation the entire section 5.406–40, which contains two ‘if not’ situations, 426–7 and 436–7) and prolepsis † (270–1; note the typical *proleptic μέλλω); and cf. the pathos of 246–50 (‘no one ever comes to Ogygia, but I, unlucky one, was dumped there by a god’).

Ad (ii): Odysseus’ restricted knowledge appears in 263, where he can only guess at Calypso’s motives for letting him go. By now he suspects – rightly – that the gods influenced her decision. Then, there is his analysis of the role of the gods: he ascribes to a *δούλων (248) and the gods (254) his arrival at Ogygia (whereas in her version Calypso referred simply to natural forces: the wind and the waves: 5.134); in 286 he says that a god made him fall asleep after his landing on Scheria, whereas the narratees know that it was Athena (5.491–3), an instance of ‘Jörgensen’s law’ †; in 278–80 and 288–91 he does not mention Athena, whereas the narratees know that it was this goddess who inspired him to go on swimming, sent Nausicaa to the beach, and made him wake up. Ad (iii): in 289–96 Odysseus has to tell the mother what she already suspects, viz. that it was her daughter who gave him the clothes. This is a delicate subject, involving the meeting between a naked man and a maiden, and when we compare the narrator’s version and Odysseus’ account the latter’s strategy becomes clear.16 He avoids giving a detailed account – there are no

15 LfgE s.v. άπεξαρνα B 2a: ‘nicht absolut, sondern relativ, also (einem Betrachter = Odysseus) endlos erscheinend’.
more *verbatim* repetitions in this section – and instead speaks in general terms: Nausicaa ‘did not fail of the right decision’ (this must be especially pleasing to the mother, who is herself described as ‘not lacking in good intelligence’: 73) and behaved unexpectedly sensibly for a young person (for this motif, cf. 3.124–5n.). Of course, Odysseus does not fail to employ vis-à-vis the parents the same flattery he used before the girl: she ‘resembled the gods’ (291; cf. 6.149–52). The narratees may also note that Odysseus considerably shortens the duration of his meeting with Nausicaa: he says that they met after the sun had set (289), whereas in reality the sun set after a long – and on the part of Nausicaa increasingly warm-blooded – conversation (6.321).

Why does Odysseus start his story with Calypso? Including this nymph provides him with a precedent for Nausicaa’s action of giving him clothes, which is suspect in the eyes of her mother: he was once saved after another shipwreck by another woman who fed him and gave him clothes (this crucial detail is mentioned twice: 259–60, 265).

The ‘Calypso’ episode is presented in the form of an epic regression †:

D There is an island Ogygia (244),
C on which Calypso lives all on her own (245–7).
B A god brought me there alone (248–9a),
A after Zeus had broken my ship (249b–250).
B’ All my companions drowned but I, catching the keel of my ship, was carried around for nine days (251–3a).
D’ On the night of the tenth day the gods led me to Ogygia (253b–254),
C’ on which Calypso lives (255).

241–3 As usual, a long narrative is preceded by an *emotional preamble, which here takes the form of the *‘re cusatio’ motif (a summary priamel †): ‘it would be difficult/painful to tell you all of my sorrows, but I will tell you that which you asked me’. Once again (cf. 213–14), Odysseus whets the appetite of the narratees and the royal couple: when will they finally hear the whole story?

244 Odysseus starts his narrative with the *‘there is a place X’ motif, emphatically introducing Ogygia.

297 Embedded narratives usually end without fanfare, which contrasts with their *emotional preambles. The ending is either a natural conclusion (arrival home, dénouement), or the moment when the past has reached the
present, or the moment when the speaker has answered his addressees’ questions. Sometimes there is a coda, in the form of a climax (cf. 8.516–20n.), an emotional evaluation (here and 14.359), an exhortation (1.301–2; 3.199–200), or a breaking-off formula (11.328–30; 12.450–3).

298–333 It is not Arete but Alcinous who reacts to ‘the stranger’s tale and a renewed, more intimate conversation between the two men ensues. Arete is not heard from again, but will implicitly make clear her acceptance of ‘the stranger’ when she orders his bed to be made up; cf. 334–47n. The conversation deals mainly with the ‘marriage’ topic and the escort of the stranger; cf. Introduction to 6.

Odysseus’ tactful condensation of the story of his encounter with Nausicaa elicits a critical reaction from Alcinous (298–301). He modifies Odysseus’ general claim that Nausicaa ‘did not fail of the right decision’ (292) on one point: ‘here is one proper thought that my daughter was not aware of: she should have escorted you to the palace’.

Odysseus gallantly answers with a white lie (302–7), which for the narratees is so transparent that the narrator does not explicitly note it in the speech-introduction: ‘she urged me to follow her, but I did not want to, fearing to anger you’ (contrast 6.255–315: Nausicaa urges him not to follow her, fearing Phaeacian gossip). Odysseus lies to shield Nausicaa, but the untrue version he gives is not unfavourable to himself either, depicting him as a respectful man. He ends his speech with a gnomic utterance, to which he gives a homely ‘we’ form, to break the ice: ‘for we people on earth are jealous’ (cf. 307n.).

Alcinous’ answer (308–28) makes it clear that Odysseus’ engaging rhetoric has been successful, perhaps too successful: he first reacts to Odysseus’ last words, claiming that he is not one who is easily angered (309–10; his *gnomic utterance, ‘moderation in everything is better’ caps that of Odysseus), and then prays that he should become his son-in-law, thereby unwittingly echoing the wish of his own daughter. Like Nausicaa in 6.244–5, Alcinous starts with a general proposition (‘may a man like you …’), but then, via the revealing ‘remaining here’, which only makes sense in connection with the stranger, ends with a direct proposition (‘I would give you a home and goods, if you would stay here’). *Alcinous’ spontaneous utterance is typical of this impressionable man. But almost immediately the king checks his own enthusiasm and becomes the perfect host again. Showing that he has listened carefully to the stranger’s narrative (especially
258–63), he stresses that he would never detain him against his will. His incantation ‘never may such be to Zeus’s liking’, will be appreciated by the narratees as dramatic irony †, since they know that Zeus has actually destined the Phaeacians to bring Odysseus home. Like Nausicaa after her day-dreaming, Alcinous returns to the subject of the stranger’s escort home: he reconfirms his promise to arrange for the escort the next day (cf. 189–92), and ensures him of the excellence of his ships and crew (cf. 192–6), which will bring him home while he sleeps (i.e., without sorrows) and in no time. He now surpasses his earlier formulation (‘even if a guest comes from very far’: 194) with the hyperbole (‘even if that home were further away than Euboea, which those of my people who went there say is furthest’), which leads on to a paradigmatic narrative (‘when once they carried Rhadamanthys on his way to Tityus’), with which he backs up his claim as to the speed of his ships (‘without effort they accomplished the journey and on the same day were back with us’).

In his brief answer (331–3), Odysseus does not react to the first part of Alcinous’ speech, his suggestion of a marriage with his daughter, but his hopeful reaction to its second part, the promise of an escort home, makes clear by implication his refusal of Nausicaa’s hand. Once again (cf. 6.180–5n.), he offers his benefactors an immaterial reward, which this time takes the form of a prayer for their ‘imperishable glory’ (*kleos). This promise hints at the stranger’s identity; if they gain glory by bringing him home, then he must be an important and famous person.

307 Gnomic utterances are short general sayings (the verb is often lacking), which are often of a paradoxical nature, involve the repetition of words, and have a moralistic or at least an evaluative flavour.17 In the Odyssey they are used exclusively by speaking characters, to underscore or explain their arguments, often at the end of a speech: 2.181–2, 276–7; 3.48, 147; 4.837 (end); 7.310b; 8.208, 329a, b, 351, 546–7, 552–4, 585–6 (end); 10.306≈14.445 (end); 11.537 (end); 15.71; 16.294b = 19.13b (end of embedded speech); 15.343; 16.447b (end); 17.176 (end), 189, 246 (end), 578 (end); 18.130–1, 404b (end); 22.104 (end).

174). The latter quality is of course most relevant to their role in the story, as the people who finally bring Odysseus home; his actual voyage (13.81–92 and 113) will confirm their reputation. The magic quality of the Phaeacian ships is gradually revealed: first Nausicaa tells Odysseus of the existence of the ships (6.264–5); Athena and Alcinous add that the ships, a gift of Poseidon, are fast (7.34–5, 194, 325–6; 8.561); and finally Alcinous explains that they need no steersmen (8.556–63).

321–3 For this type of assurance, cf. Hermes in *Il.* 24.437–8 (‘I would escort you [Priam], even to famous Argos’). Whereas for other Homeric characters the Phaeacians are remote (cf. 6.8; 7.204–5), for the Phaeacians themselves Euboea in the centre of mainland Greece is the remotest destination imaginable.

334–47 The type-scene of *‘retiring for the night’ is now resumed (cf. 229–347n.): first the guest, for whom a bed is being prepared (335–45; expanded with the servants’ invitation to Odysseus and the latter’s joy at the sight of the bed, for which cf. 6.220n.), then the hosts (346–7). Though it is customary for the hostess to order the preparation of the bed for a guest (cf. Helen in 4.296–9), the fact that Arete does so here signifies implicitly that she believes and finds acceptable the stranger’s story as to how he got the clothes, and therefore has accepted him as her suppliant and guest; cf. 139–347n. Line 344 repeats 6.1 and the parallel invites the narratees to compare Odysseus’ situation then (without clothes, sleeping on an improvised bed of leaves, with no certainty about his future) and his situation now (with clothes, sleeping on a regular ‘corded bedstead’, and with the promise of an escort home). The final two lines, however, remind us that not everything is yet settled for our hero: he still does not lie in his own bed with his wife next to him, as does Alcinous.

342 This is one of the twelve one-line speeches in the *Odyssey*; cf. 8.358; 9.408; 10.320; 11.80; 14.493; 16.337; 17.494; 22.491; 24.407, 491, 495. The *Iliad* has thirteen instances: 6.479; 8.149; 11.606; 18.182, 392; 20.429; 22.107, 498; 23.707, 753, 770; 24.88. If we disregard the *Apologue*, the average length of the speeches in the *Odyssey* is the same as in the *Iliad* (about eleven lines).
This book begins the thirty-third day (and night), the longest of the *Odyssey*: it lasts until 13.17; cf. Appendix A.

In 7.189–96 Alcinous had announced that the next day he would first entertain the stranger and then attend to his escort home. This book brings, in reverse order †, the fulfilment of this announcement: the stranger’s escort is publicly announced in an assembly (1–47) and the initial preparations for the journey are made (48–55), followed by the entertainment, consisting of a meal and song (62–103), games and song (104–468), and another meal and song (469–586). The reverse order allows the entertainment to take on enormous dimensions, with Odysseus himself becoming the entertainer for the duration of four books (9–12). In fact, we are dealing here with a powerful instance of misdirection †. Throughout the narratees are given to understand that ‘the stranger’ is to depart that evening (in 26–45 Alcinous orders ships to be prepared; in 51–5 we find the first elements of a ‘departure by ship’ type-scene; in 150–1 Laodamas reassures Odysseus that ‘your return is not far away, for a ship is already lying ready’; in 367–417 we have ‘farewell’ speeches and the exchange of guest-gifts; and in 536–86 Alcinous repeatedly mentions his *pompe*),¹ but, in the end, Odysseus does not depart that evening, postponing his passionately desired voyage home himself; cf. 11.330–84n.

This day of entertainment is a retardation † in the prolonged process of Odysseus’ ‘delayed recognition’, but at the same time it is conducive to his self-revelation, in that he gains in self-confidence, drops hints of his identity and, spurred on by Demodocus’ songs, requests another song, which will

then lead Alcinous to ask for his name; cf. Introduction to 7. The action of
the day is punctuated by three interventions by the tactful host *Alcinous,
who is each time singled out by the *“(all) the others . . . but X (alone) . . .’

An important role is played by the singer Demodocus. Professional
singers are prominently present in the Odyssey: besides mentioning two
anonymous singers (in 3.267–71 and 4.17–18), it features two fully devel-
oped named singers, who are characters in the main story (Phemius: Book
1, 17 and 22; Demodocus: Book 8 and 13). Phemius and Demodocus are
character doublets †, created to make clear the difference between Ithaca, a
society in disorder, and Scheria, a society in harmony: *Phemius is forced to
sing for the Suitors against his will and later will have to beg Odysseus for
his life, while Demodocus is held in esteem by the entire Phaeacian popula-
tion and will be highly praised by Odysseus. The exceptionally gifted
Demodocus is the more important of the two figures.

The prominent role given to singers in the Odyssey – in the Iliad they are
marginal figures – is of course related to the peacetime setting of this narra-
tive, but it also reflects the narrator’s increased self-consciousness; cf.
1.1–10n. He is a professional singer himself and through Demodocus and
Phemius he can indirectly ‘promote’ – perhaps even idealize – his own pro-
fession. Both singers are called ‘very famous’ (περικλαυτός: 1.325, 8.83 = 367
= 521), ‘esteemed’ (ἐρήμως: 1.346; 8.62, 471), and, like all singers (cf. 4.17
and II. 18.604), ‘divine’ (θείος/θεσπιτης: 43, 13.27, 16.252, 17.385; 23.133, 143),
presumably because of their close association with their ‘patron’, the Muse,
who loves them and gives/teaches them their songs (44, 480–1, 488; and cf.
22.347–8n.). Demodocus is also ‘honoured among the people’ (472, 13.28).
Demodocus’ song not only celebrates ‘the famous actions (klea) of men’ (73),
like all heroic songs, but partakes of fame (*kleos: 74) itself. Singers, together
with prophets, doctors, and artisans, belong to the class of ‘workers for the
people’ (17.383–5), but on one occasion Demodocus is actually called a ἀρετος
(483), a prerogative which he shares with the herald Moulius (18.423). But
the narrator pays his own profession perhaps the greatest compliment by
repeatedly comparing the hero Odysseus to a singer; cf. 11.363–9n.

The close relationship between singers and the narrator allows us to take a number of utterances concerning songs as metanarrative, i.e., pertaining to the main narrative/song as well; cf. 1.351–2 (people like the latest song); 8.73–5 (‘path’ of song), 83–92 (audience reaction), 487–91 (‘truth’); 12.447–53 (reluctance to tell the same story twice); and 22.347–8nn. (relation with Muses to be understood as double motivation). If the Odyssean narrator presents an image of himself in Demodocus and Phemius, he is at the same time hinting that his own song surpasses theirs (cf. 1.1–10n.): it is the newest one, it is the one which now is most famous, and it presents the story of the most successful Greek veteran of the Trojan War, who manages to combine kleos and nostos. We may also note that it surpasses the embedded songs in size: the mimetically represented second song of Demodocus takes up some 100 lines, Odysseus’ ‘song’, the Apologue, comprises around 2,000 lines, which is still a far cry from the monumental 12,000 lines of the Odyssey itself.

1–47 An instance of an *‘assembly’ scene, which presents a number of deviations: (i) the summoning of the people (7–24; expanded with a speech by ‘the herald’/Athena, in which she ‘massages’ the Phaeacians, and a ‘beautification’ scene); (ii) the convener Alcinous proclaims his intentions (25–45); (iii) there is no mention of the people’s approval; (iv) there are no other speakers; and (v) the assembly is never dispersed, since it is to be continued in the form of a feast (46–7; Alcinous leads the way to his palace, and the other ‘kings’ follow, while the young men come later, after preparing the ship). All these deviations point in the same direction: this is no normal assembly, convened to decide a controversial matter, but a means for Alcinous to proclaim publicly the escort he has already promised his guest; cf. Introduction to 7.

1–3 The order of rising (Alcinous – Odysseus) is the reverse † of that of retiring for the night (Odysseus – Alcinous: 7.344–7).

3 The epithet πτολιπορθος, ‘sacker of cities’ is a seed †: it is given here for the first time in the Odyssey to Odysseus and prepares for Demodocus’ third song, which will deal with the sacking of Troy and Odysseus’ important role in that event.

17–20 A *‘beautification’ scene, which, as usual, is carried out by Athena, precedes an important performance, and triggers admiration. Odysseus had in fact been beautified by her the day before (6.229–35), but the new onlookers (the Phaeacians instead of Nausicaa) and narrative
convention (cf. the beautification of Telemachus before the assembly in 2.12–13) require a new beautification. The narrator intrudes upon the Phaeacians’ admiring embedded focalization †, referring to Odysseus as ‘the wise son of Laertes’ (18) instead of ‘the stranger’, as would have been logical from their point of view; an instance of paralepsis †.

21–3 As so often, *Athena’s embedded focalization functions as a signpost for the narratees: they hear that Odysseus will be tested by the Phaeacians in ‘many games’ (in fact, it will only be one, but the contest in which he participates is part of a series, and if it had been up to Athena or himself he would have participated in more than one contest: 197, 204–7).

26–45 In his speech Alcinous starts by indicating the issue at stake, the stranger’s request for an escort home (26–30), and then comes up with his proposal, viz. to grant the stranger his request and to entertain him (31–45); this is gradually transformed from a suggestion (in the form of adhortative subjunctives), via a third-person imperative, into an order (second-person imperatives). Alcinous himself makes explicit the illocutionary force of his words in 40 (‘I order this . . .’). Thus, his speech is clearly not intended to trigger a discussion; cf. 1–47n. For Odysseus’ escort home, cf. Introduction to 7.

Alcinous’ remark that he does not know who the stranger is or where he comes from (28–9) alerts the narratees to the ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern (cf. Introduction to 7), which to a large extent determines the atmosphere of this book: the Phaeacians are not aware that the stranger in their midst is the famous Odysseus, whom they know so well from Demodocus’ songs. It also indicates that Alcinous is still curious about the stranger’s identity (cf. 7.199–206), a curiosity which he suppresses for the time being out of politeness, but which at the end of this book will become too strong for him.

*Alcinous shows himself to be a perfect host: he offers the stranger a new ship (35) and the best rowers (36).

31–3 For the reputation of the Phaeacians as prompt conveyers, cf. 7.318–28n.

45–6 Alcinous’ emphatic ‘plug’ of *Demodocus prepares the narratees for the importance of this figure in the ensuing scenes.

46–62 The execution of Alcinous’ orders is, as always, duly recorded by the narrator:
The bulk of the activities take place during the time the herald is away to fetch Demodocus; an instance of the ‘fill-in’ technique †.

48–55 This passage contains the first elements of the *‘departure by ship’* type-scene: (i) a crew is selected (48); (ii) those who are to sail make their way to the ship (49–50); (iii) a ship is drawn into the sea (51); (iv) made ready for the voyage (52–4); and (v) moored (55). Not until 13.19–80 will the type-scene be completed.

49 An instance of the *‘X acted as Y had ordered’* motif.

62–103 The scene featuring Demodocus’ first song forms an anticipatory doublet † of the last scene of this book, when he sings his third song (469–586): we find the same sequence of meal – song – stranger’s reaction – and intervention by Alcinous, who has the singer stop. As usual, the second instance surpasses the first in length and significance.

63–4 The laudatory motif of *‘the gift of the gods’* in the case of Demodocus is both intensified (cf. πέρι, ‘in extraordinary measure’ in 44, 63) and varied (he is given one thing, song, but robbed of another thing, his eyes).

65–70 Demodocus’ blindness entails special arrangements for his installation, which are made by the Phaeacians and recounted by the narrator with loving care. The figure of the blind singer is well attested in epic tradition; cf. e.g., h. Ap. 172.3 The case of the singer Thamyris (II. 2.594–600) is different, in that he was maimed and deprived of his ability to sing.

---

3 Bowra (1952: 420–2).
This is the first of three songs sung by Demodocus in this book: cf. 266–366 and 499–520.¹ The songs differ in content (the first and third deal with human beings, the second with gods), but correspond on the thematic level (all three deal with the *‘cunning versus force’ theme, which is one of the central themes of the *Odyssey* itself). Two songs deal with the Trojan War and continue for the narratees the characterization of *Odysseus* as a Trojan hero, which was begun by Nestor, Helen, and Menelaus. In their turn, they form the prelude to *Odysseus’* own *Apologue*: he can start where Demodocus left off, after the fall of Troy (cf. 9.39: ‘From Troy wind blew me to . . .’).

The three songs resemble each other in form: Demodocus is not turned into a speaker (as is ‘the singer’ *Odysseus* in the *Apologue*), but his words are represented in indirect speech (73–8: ‘the Muse incited him to sing about the quarrel, *how* they once . . .’; 266–9: ‘he began to sing about the love affair, *how* for the first time they . . .’; 499–503: ‘he displayed his song starting from that point, *how* . . .’), which is quickly abandoned in favour of an independent construction. In the case of the second song, which is presented in great detail, including the quotation of direct speeches, the voices of the narrator and Demodocus seem to merge. Is the narrator trying to make clear that Demodocus is an image of himself?⁵

The way in which Demodocus begins his songs mirrors in important respects the opening of the Homeric epics themselves (cf. 1.1–10n.): there is an indication of the subject of the song by way of ‘title’ (75: ‘the quarrel between *Odysseus* and *Achilles*’, 267: ‘the love-affair between *Ares* and *Aphrodite*’; and cf. 492–3 where *Odysseus* suggests as subject ‘the trick of the Wooden Horse’), a reference to the Muse, who is said to stir up the singer (73, 499), and a carefully chosen starting point (268: ‘*how* for the first time’, 500: ‘starting from that point’).

The first song, which tells about *Odysseus* in the presence of an unrecognized *Odysseus*, is a special instance of the kind of dramatic irony † which typically belongs to the *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern; cf. 4.104–12n. However, what for the narratees is merely a form of irony, is of the utmost importance to *Odysseus*: he is confronted with his own *kleos* after seven

---

¹ Thornton (1970: 43–5), Macleod (1982: 2–5), and Olson (1989a) and see notes ad individual songs. ⁵ Richardson (1990: 84–7).
years of isolation on Calypso’s isle. The confrontation makes him sad, but at the same time contributes to his mental ‘re-awakening’ (cf. Introduction to 6); thus he himself will later ask for another Trojan song featuring Odysseus.

The narrator presents Demodocus’ song in a highly elliptical manner (what do Achilles and Agamemnon quarrel about, what was the content of the oracle which Agamemnon received, when was the oracle given?). If we assume that it is presented in the form of an epic regression †, then the interpretation is as follows:

C Achilles and Odysseus once quarrelled during a feast for the gods, and Agamemnon was pleased that the best of the Greeks quarrelled.

B For thus [that he would take Troy when ‘the best of the Achaeans’ quarrelled] Apollo had told him in Pytho, when he entered to consult the oracle;

A for at that time [of the oracle] the beginning of woe [the Trojan War] rolled down upon Greeks and Trojans through Zeus’s plan.

The story of a quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus is not known elsewhere, which suggests that it might be an ad hoc invention by the narrator (perhaps adapting elements from the Iliad, such as a quarrel between two generals, and alluding to that poem in Διὸς . . . διὸ βουλᾶς ≈ Διὸς . . . βουλή; Il. 1.5). On the other hand, its allusive presentation suggests that it must be known to the narratees. In any case, the few details which are mentioned suit the direct and larger contexts in which the story is embedded: (i) it features Odysseus (one of the listeners to the song); (ii) who is involved in a quarrel (as he soon will be with the Phaeacian Euryalus); (iii) the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles suggests the opposition ‘cunning versus force’, the theme of Demodocus’ other songs as well, and a theme of the Odyssey itself; (iv) reference is made to ‘the beginning of woe’, presumably the beginning of the Trojan War, while Demodocus’ last song will describe its end, the fall of Troy.

For the importance of Achilles and Odysseus being mentioned in one breath, cf. 11.482–91n.

This passage provides important *metanarrative information: ‘to sing the famous deeds of men (≈ the ‘genre’ of heroic poetry), (choosing), from the song-path (≈ epic cycle, i.e., cluster of songs)7 which at that time was famous, (the song of) the quarrel’. The metaphor of the path which one senses in οἵμη (whether etymologically correct or not) will be continued in μετάβηθι, ‘pass over to’ (sc. another song) in 492.

The narrator’s use of τότε in an absolute sense, ‘at that time (in the past)’ is exceptional; the only two parallels are II. 6.314 and 14.287.8 This emphatic ‘then’ implies a ‘now’. The narrator seems to be calling attention, in his usual oblique way, to his own song (cf. 1.1–10n.): at that time (of Odysseus) songs about the Trojan War (including the nostoi of the Greeks, cf. Phemius in 1.325–7) were most famous, now that position is taken by his song, which telling about the nostos of the last of the Greeks to come home, is the sequel to all earlier songs; the Odyssey ‘portrays itself consciously as the last in a long line of song’.9

The Trojan war is called a πῆμα, ‘an evil’. This is an emotional word, which belongs to the character-language † (forty-five times in direct speech out of a total of forty-seven occurrences); it may be a ‘mimetic’ element in the narrator’s summary of Demodocus’ song. Likewise, the metaphor of evil ‘rolling towards’ people, i.e., being inescapable, occurs only in speech (Il. 11.347; 17.99, 688). The negative perspective is typical of the Odyssean way of looking back at the Trojan War, even though it ended in victory for the Greeks; cf. 3.103–17n.

The intended **effect of epic storytelling**10 is ‘to delight’ (τέρπειν/-εσθαία),11 and even to ‘enchant’ (θέλγειν, κηληθμός), so that the listener wants to go on listening (17.520; cf. the ‘fatal attraction’ of the Sirens: 12.39–54). Thus the Phaeacians enjoy Demodocus’ song (91). However, for those who are involved in the events recounted and who do not yet know their final outcome, the effect is different: Odysseus weeps here and in 521–31 (specifically because the songs make clear painfully to him the contrast between his heroic successes of the past and his misery of the ten years which followed), while Penelope weeps in 1.328–44 (specifically because

---

8 De Jong (1987a: 44).
the song about the return of the Greeks intensifies her grief over Odysseus, who has not yet returned). Like all Greek veterans of the Trojan war, Odysseus looks back on the war with grief; cf. 3.103–17n. But when the events have ended happily, even these listeners take delight in their own stories: as Eumaeus puts it, ‘afterwards a man who has suffered much and wandered much takes pleasure in his own sorrows’ (15.400–1). Thus in 23.300–43 Odysseus and Penelope will enjoy each other’s stories about the vicissitudes of the past ten years.

And what of the narratees † of the Odyssey? If we take the above passages as metanarrative, what response is expected of them? Like the narrator †, they are not personally involved in the events of the story, and this may suggest a response similar to that of the Phaeacians: pure delight. And yet, the Homeric narrative style is implicitly, but unmistakably, aimed at arousing engagement and compassion, and it seems more likely that the narratees are meant to take Eumaeus as their model, who is both moved (14.361–2) and fascinated (17.515–21) by the – false – tale told him by Odysseus.

Odysseus covers his head with his mantle in an effort to hide his tears, because ‘he felt shame’ towards the Phaeacians. This is not shame because of the weeping itself (which was not considered unmanly in Homer; cf. Odysseus’ permanent homesick weeping on Ogygia, 5.150–9n., and his – often repressed – weeping at the moments of recognition on Ithaca, 16.4–219n.), but because it spoils the party (cf. 90–1: the Phaeacians, who are hugely enjoying themselves, ask the singer to continue, and 9.3–11: Odysseus excuses himself for being the cause of the interruption of Demodocus’ song).

For the similarity between Odysseus and Telemachus, who both hide their tears, cf. Introduction to 7.

93–103 Alcinous’ first intervention of the day; cf. Introduction. Tactfully glossing over the true reason for his proposal (‘the stranger’s tears), he suggests to his compatriots that they have had enough food and song, and the moment has now come for another form of entertainment: athletic games.

101–3 The idea that ‘a guest will remember his host (at home)’ is com-

12 Griffin (1980: 103–43) and de Jong (1987a, esp. 98).
monplace in the *Odyssey*: 4.591–2; 8.461–2; 15.54–5, 125–8; 19.332–4; (in hyperbolic form) 8.467–8 and 15.181. We find the motif no fewer than four times coming from *Alcinous* (here, 241–9, 251–3, 431–2), which suggests that in his case it has a characterizing function. He does not merely want to be remembered by the stranger, he also wants the latter to tell others about the Phaeacians; as king of an isolated kingdom he is eager for the outside world to know of the athletic, musical, and nautical prowess of his people, and his own wealth. Odysseus will indeed remember and tell others about the Phaeacians when he gets home; cf. 16.227–31; 19.278–82; and 23.338–41.  

104–468 The scene of the games consists of four parts: the athletic games, intended by Alcinous to distract his guest (104–31), evolve into a conflict between the stranger and the Phaeacian Euryalus (132–255), the tension is released by Demodocus’ second song (256–366), after which a reconciliation takes place (367–468).

In the person of Euryalus we see an example of the Phaeacian insolence about which both Nausicaa and Athena had previously warned Odysseus (6.274, 7.32–3). In the end, however, the conflict will have a salutary effect on Odysseus, actively contributing to the recovery of his self-confidence and bringing him his first gifts. When provoked, Odysseus also drops more hints about his identity, thus leading up to his final revelation (cf. Introduction to 7). In 179–85 he declares that he is a skilled athlete (and hence belongs to the aristocracy). He also states that he has participated in wars. For the narratees, the stranger’s τολλα γαρ ἐτλην (182) even refers directly to τολύτλας Odysseus. In 216–20 he reveals that he is a bowman and warrior, a Greek, and has fought in the Trojan War.

The abuse suffered by Odysseus from the Phaeacian youths anticipates that of the Suitors (17.360–506n.) and some of his servants (17.204–60n.) on Ithaca; cf. Introduction to 6. The connection is underscored when Euryalus is called ‘outrageous’ (166), since the root *ἀτασθαλ* is used in the *Odyssey* mainly for the Suitors. The Phaeacian youths confirm the negative image of youth in the Homeric epics; cf. 2.324n.  

105–8 The explicit mention of the fact that Demodocus came along with the others, led by the hand by a herald, who first hung up his lyre, is a seed †, preparing the narratees for Demodocus’ second song, sung on the *agora*.

104–31 Athletic games⁴ are twice briefly referred to (24.85–92; *Il.*.
11.698–702), once described in some detail (*Iliad* 23.629–45), and twice narrated scenically (here and *Iliad* 23.257–897). They may include boxing, wrestling, running, horse-racing, jumping, panoply fighting, discus throwing, spear throwing, and archery. In the present instance the narrator deals quickly with a number of contests (running: 120–5, wrestling: 126–7, jumping: 128, discus throwing: 129, boxing: 130), before rushing on to the main event: the quarrel.

110–19 This passage combines two venerable Homeric techniques: the *catalogue (cf. especially in the context of Patroclus’ funeral games: *Iliad* 23.288–302) and the use of speaking names.*15 In combination, the second technique almost annuls the effect of the first: the young Phaeacians stand up to compete with each other like true heroes – one of them is even honoured with a heroic comparison to Ares, which occurs only here in the *Odyssey* – and yet their names, which all have to do with seafaring, betray where their real competence lies.

There is only one person listed in the catalogue, Euryalus, to whom a piece of explicit narratorial characterization † is attributed (115–17), marking him as one of the protagonists of the ensuing scenes. The information given (he was ‘the best of all the Phaeacians in build and beauty’) prepares for Odysseus’ later remark: ‘you look fine but your mind is worthless’ (176–7).

124–5 A quantitative simile †, invoked to indicate a distance; cf. *Iliad* 10.351–2 (again in the context of running) and 23.845–7 (in the context of games).

132–255 The way in which the exchange between Odysseus and the two Phaeacian youths escalates into a conflict, the tone gradually becoming sharper and more aggressive, recalls the build-up of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad* I. Feelings are too heated for a symmetrically structured set of speeches; rather, it is the repetition of words which gives the altercation its unity:

Laodamas Let us ask the stranger whether he is experienced in athletics. He looks strong enough, but he is broken down by the sea (133–9).

Euryalus You have spoken well, challenge him (141–2).

---

(he replaces the neutral ‘ask’ by the more aggressive ‘challenge’)

Laodamas Come over here, father stranger, and try the contests, if perhaps you are experienced in one (145–6a).

(the insertion of ‘perhaps’ introduces a note of doubt, and the vocative suggests that the stranger is too old to participate)

You look like someone who knows athletics (146b).

(It is good/necessary for you to participate) For there is no greater kleos for man than that won by his feet and hands (147–8).

(The Phaeacian youth unwittingly lecturing the Trojan War veteran embodies a kind of dramatic irony † which in the case of Nausicaa, 6.190, may elicit a smile, but which here will irritate Odysseus)

So try them and forget your troubles, for your voyage home is at hand (149–51).

(well-intentioned advice, which, however, inevitably plays down Odysseus’ troubles)

Odysseus Why do you urge me on, speaking provocative words (153)?

(although the narrator had in 148 introduced Laodamas’ speech in neutral terms, Odysseus interprets it as provocative)

My troubles are more on my mind than contests. I who have suffered much in the past and now am sitting as a suppliant amongst you (154–7).

narrator marks explicitly that Euryalus ‘spoke in abuse’ (158).

Euryalus (I knew you were going to decline) For you do not look like a man experienced in athletics, but more like a trader. For you do not look like an athlete (159–64).

(what is at stake is not only the stranger’s athletic skills, but also his status)

narrator introduces Odysseus’ speech as spoken while he ‘looked darkly’, which suggests that ‘a threshold has been reached and such inflammable materials as wounded pride, righteous indignation, frustration, shame, and shock are nearing the combustion point’.16

Odysseus You have not spoken well. You look like a reckless man.

---

The gods do not give the graces of looks, brains, and eloquence to all. One man is less impressive as regards his appearance but speaks divinely, another looks divine but is a graceless speaker. You are extremely handsome, but your mind is worthless. You have stirred me with your words. I was a first rate athlete, but have been besought by sorrows. But even though I have suffered much, I will try the contests, for you have stirred me (166–85).

Narrator recounts how Odysseus successfully throws the discus (186–200) and then – uniquely – introduces Odysseus’ speech as spoken ‘more light-heartedly’ (201).

Odysseus Reach that (discus of mine), young men (202a). (the vocative is a triumphant retort to Euryalus’ ‘father stranger’ in 145)

I will soon throw another one which is equally big or even heavier. Come, let any one of the others try me – for you have angered me – in boxing, wrestling, or running, except for Laodamas. For who would fight with a friend? That man is a fool who quarrels with his host, while he is far from home (202b–211).

(his shrewdly couches his exclusion of Laodamas in a *rhetorical question and a *gnomic utterance, for a victory over him might jeopardize his escort home)

But of the others I refuse no one, rather I want to be tried.

(General claim) I am not bad at all contests. (First contest) I know how to handle a bow. (Argument from the past to back up this claim) The only one who surpassed me in Troy was Philoctetes. But of the other contemporaries I am by far the best. I will not vie with archers from the past like Heracles or Eurytus, (dissuasive paradigm) who vied with the gods and one of whom was killed. (Second contest) I throw a spear as far as others an arrow. (Third contest) Only in running do I fear to be surpassed by a Phaeacian, because my condition is not good (212–33).

(he modifies his earlier claim in 206, which is actually confirmed by Il. 23.740–79, and diplomatically concedes his hosts one area of athletic excellence)
Alcinous (intervenes to put an end to the quarrel) Stranger, you are right to be angry, Euryalus was wrong to insult you (236–40).

(his χωδόμενος mirrors Odysseus’ ἐχολώσατε: 205, his νείκεσεν the νείκεση of the narrator: 158).

Listen to my proposal. Actually, we are no boxers or wrestlers, but we do excel in running, seamanship, and dancing (241–9).

(a modification of 102–3; gratefully, he picks up the one area of athletic excellence left to him by the stranger: running; cf. 230–3)

(turning to his compatriots) Let the best Phaeacian dancers give a demonstration (250–5).

139 For Laodamas and his Phaeacian audience, ἕνδρα refers to ‘a man’ in general. However, because of the marked initial position in the verse, the narratees are reminded of the ἕνδρα in 1.1 and, in a second move, can interpret Laodamas’ dictum as an unchanging truth about Odysseus: ‘there is nothing more harmful to the man who is the subject of this poem than the sea’.17

147–8 In the Odyssey the range of actions which may gain a man *kleos is greatly expanded, but Laodamas’ – unique – claim that there is no greater kleos than that won through athletics seems characteristic of the unheroic *Phaeacians, who do not wage war (the occasion par excellence to win kleos). Cf. their equally unheroic conception of arete (241–9n.).

152–7 Odysseus’ initial refusal to participate in the games is characteristic of his present state of mind; cf. Introduction to 7.

169–77 In the description of the first imaginary man the narratees may detect Odysseus himself, of whom Antenor said that he did not look impressive, but once he started to speak he won everyone’s admiration (Il. 3.216–24); the unique expression αἰδοὶ μειλιχία, ‘with blandishing modesty’ (172), also recalls Odysseus’ μειλίχιον, ‘blandishing’, speech to Nausicaa in 6.148–85. Both imaginary men are instances of the *‘outward appearance versus inner quality’ theme.

186–200 Odysseus’ superiority in discus throwing is made amply clear: he wins ‘with his mantle still on’ (contrast Telemachus in 21.118, who takes of his cloak before trying to string the bow); throws a much heavier discus

than the Phaeacians; his throw surpasses that of all the others, a fact which is not only recorded by the narrator (192) but also by ‘a man’/Athena, in the form of the *(not) even + hyperbole’ motif (195–6; ‘even a blind man could distinguish your mark by feeling for it’). Not only is Odysseus’ claim to be an athlete confirmed, but the narrator also gently pokes fun at the Phaeacians: they duck ‘under the flight of’ Odysseus’ discus; contrast the Greeks who in II. 23.847 shout – in admiration – at the winning discus throw of Polypoetes. The emphatic inclusion at this point of two of their epithets (‘men of long oars’ and ‘famed for seafaring’) provide a hint as to where their real abilities lie (as will be confirmed by Alcinous in 247 and 253); cf. 110–19n.

193–200 A brief instance of a *god meets mortal’ scene. Athena’s intervention is unusual in that it takes place after, rather than before an action by a mortal, as is customary for divine interventions. But, in fact, this is the way in which this goddess operates in the Odyssey: she creates a favourable starting position for her protégé or afterwards consolidates his success, but he must do the actual job himself.

200 Odysseus focalizes ‘the Phaeacian man’/Athena (whom he will presumably take to be a referee) as a ‘kind friend’. The narratees, who know the real identity of ‘the friend’, can appreciate the aptness of this affective description (ἐνηγίς belongs to the character-language †: three times direct speech, twice embedded focalization). The brief insight into the hero’s mind brings home something the narratees might otherwise forget, being constantly informed about Athena’s invisible (cf. 6.329–31) support, namely, how lonely he must feel amidst a host of strangers.

206 For Odysseus’ reputation as a wrestler, cf. 4.341–6n.; as a runner, 230–1. He will display his boxing qualities against the beggar Irus in 18.1–158.

215–28 Odysseus says the most about his abilities as an archer. This is the second passage which prepares the narratees for his climactic performance as an *archer in Books 21 and 22. In fact, in 21.11–41 it will turn out that Odysseus’ bow once belonged to the famous Eurytus here evoked.

219–20 For Philoctetes’ skill as an archer, cf. II. 2.718. There is no reference here to Philoctetes’ vital role in the capture of Troy (alluded to in II. 2.724–5); the omission may be due to Odysseus’ or the narrator’s desire to make Odysseus, inventor of the stratagem of the Wooden Horse, the sole and main agent in the fall of Troy.

223–8 The story of Eurytus is told in the form of an epic regression †:

C I will not vie with archers from the past like Heracles and Eurytus,
B who vied with the gods.
A For that reason Eurytus died quickly.
A' For an angry Apollo killed Eurytus,
B' because he had challenged him.

Why does Odysseus tell this story? In the first place, it forms part of his rhetoric of self-promotion. Heracles and Eurytus are the most famous archers of the past: for Heracles, cf. 11.606–8 and *II*. 5.392–7; Eurytus’ excellence is nowhere described explicitly, but it is implied in 21.31–3, where we hear about his bow. Although Odysseus concedes Heracles and Eurytus (and earlier Philoctetes) the first place in archery, the very fact that he puts himself in the same category as these famous archers and gives himself the second place (which is not a dishonourable one in the Homeric epics; cf. 24.18; *II*. 2.673–4; 9.140; 12.103–4; 16.145–6) makes clear his excellence. But the story also seems to have a specific argument function †: Odysseus is implicitly telling Euryalus never to challenge a person who is superior to himself.


234–55 Alcinous’ second intervention of the day; cf. Introduction. He changes the entertainment from games to song and dance.

241–55 Characteristically, Alcinous twice inserts the *‘a guest will remember his host (at home)’* motif. The first time (241–9) he is addressing the stranger and hence uses the ‘you’ form. The element ‘at home’ (cf. 102, 252) is here expanded into a little scene: ‘if you are dining in your palace with your wife and your children’ (Alcinous projects his own situation on that of the stranger, whose personal circumstances he is as yet unaware of). The second time (251–3) is a brief, neutral repetition of 241–9, inserted only because he is now addressing his fellow Phaeacians (cf. 250).

241–9 The definition of *arete* which Alcinous gives here – excellence in
running, seamanship, dancing, and a luxurious lifestyle, instead of the customary military and rhetorical prowess – reveals, as in the case of Laodamas’ use of *kleos* in 147–8, the unheroic nature of the Phaeacians; in the *Iliad* dancing is repeatedly contrasted with fighting (3.392–4; 16.617; 24.261).

One last time Odysseus is given information about the *Phaeacians*. In point of fact, at this stage of the story he has himself already profited from their love of meals (cf. 7.175–6; 8.71), song (cf. 8.73–82), clean clothes (cf. 6.214), and beds (cf. 7.340–5), and immediately afterwards will profit from their excellence in heating bathing water (450–1).

256–65 Alcinous’ two orders (A: the best Phaeacian dancers are to dance, and B: someone is to get Demodocus’ lyre) are executed in reverse order †:

B’ A herald sets out to get the lyre (256b–257).
A’ Nine dancers stand up and prepare the dancing floor (258–60).
B’ A herald returns with the lyre (261–2a).
A’ The group of dancers starts dancing (262b–265).

This is the first ‘dancing’ scene, to be followed in 370–80 by a more elaborate one. Both times the dances arouse Odysseus’ admiration, which the second time he will give expression to verbally. Another Homeric ‘dancing’ scene is found in *Il.* 18.590–606.

266–366 Demodocus’ second song¹⁸ recounts the adulterous love affair between Ares and Aphrodite and their punishment by Hephaestus; in spirit it is comparable to Zeus’s seduction by Hera in *Il.* 14.153–351. The story is told *ab ovo* (cf. τὰ πρῶτα) and chronologically. The pace of narration is leisured, with no fewer than nine speeches being quoted directly.

The ‘Ares–Aphrodite’ story has different meanings for the characters in the story and the narratees. Demodocus’ second performance is intended by Alcinous to release the tension which had developed between the stranger and the Phaeacian youths. Thus the singer chooses a humorous story, in which there is a great deal of laughter (cf. 306–43n.). More particularly, the song seems framed to pay ‘the stranger’ an indirect compliment: lame

Hephaestus’ triumph through cleverness over the handsome and swift Ares recalls the tired ‘stranger’s defeat of young and handsome Euryalus; the fine which Ares has to pay Hephaestus anticipates Euryalus’ compensation to the stranger.

For the narratees, the song has two ‘key’ functions †. In the first place, it deals with the subject of adultery, and can therefore be compared to the adultery of Helen, Clytemnestra, and – potentially – Penelope; Aphrodite is called κυνωπίς, ‘bitch-eyed’ (319), like Helen (4.145; II. 3.180) and Clytemnestra (11.424). There is, however, an important difference between this divine adultery story and the human ones: for the gods, the confrontation ends without any bloodshed and after pressure on the part of Poseidon (who here plays the role of judge instead of Zeus, presumably because Demodocus wants to reserve a central role for the patron god of his listeners; cf. 6.266n.) Hephaestus releases his victims after payment of a fine; on the human level, a man (Aegisthus), an entire population (the Trojans), or over a hundred men (the Suitors) have to pay with their lives for their transgression, in the case of the Suitors, because Odysseus refuses to accept a fine (22.54–64). This is the crucial difference between mortal men and immortal gods: what the latter see as no more than a game (even though they may feel strong emotions at the time), is deadly serious for the former; cf. in Iliad 1 the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles (which will lead to the death of many men) versus that between Hera and Zeus (which ends in laughter). In the second place, the ‘Ares–Aphrodite’ story places the ‘cunning versus force’ theme, so central to the Odyssey, on the agenda: lame Hephaestus defeats the fastest of the gods through guile, just as in the past Odysseus has defeated strong opponents with the help of tricks (the capture of Troy through the Wooden Horse; cf. 4.271–89n.; and the escape from the Cyclops’ cave; cf. 9.106–566n.), and will do so again in the future (his disguise as a ‘beggar’ allowing him to outwit a multitude of Suitors; cf. 13.372–439n.).

The cleverness of Hephaestus and Odysseus, who are the only ones to be given the epithet πολύφρον, ‘ingenious’, is not merely a question of devising physical stratagems (net, Wooden Horse, blinding of the Cyclops); they are also able to hide their emotions and plan their revenge in silence, coolly awaiting the right moment to strike. Thus the expression ‘devising evils in the depths of his heart’, said of Hephaestus in 273, is used of Odysseus in his confrontations with the Cyclops (9.316) and the Suitors (17.465; 20.184).

The story also provides an example of the *‘outward appearance versus
inner quality’ theme: Aphrodite is ‘beautiful’ but not ‘in control of her temper’ (320); the same opposition is implied in the case of ‘beautiful’ Ares (310); conversely, Hephaestus is lame (and not good-looking), but clever.

Not only is the subject of the song humorous, its narrator Demodocus also adopts a humorous style: in 280–1 the *(not) even + hyperbole* motif *(‘no one would have seen it, not even one of the gods’) is literally apt, in that Ares and Aphrodite will indeed fail to see the net; in 286 the use of Hephaestus’ epithet κλυτοτέχνης, ‘famed for his technical craftsmanship’, as part of Ares’ focalization humorously points up that Ares is unaware of the τέχνη (cf. 297, 327) which this god has just constructed to punish him; in 352 Hephaestus makes a pun, asking Poseidon how he could ‘bind’ him if Ares did not pay the fine, an obvious allusion to the trick of the ‘bindings’.

270–1 For Helius’ role here and in 302, cf. 11.109 and Il. 3.277; 14.344–5. As sun-god he is typically the person who sees everything.

283–294 An instance of the *‘action–perception–reaction’ pattern: Hephaestus starts for Lemnos; Ares sees him leave and, telling Aphrodite that Hephaestus ‘haply’ (που) has gone to Lemnos, invites her to make love.

306–43 In antiquity there were already two variants, γελαστά (the MSS.) and ἀγέλαστα (scholia, lexica) in 307. In an oral performance the difference between the two variants (ἐργα γέλαστα versus ἐργα γελαστά) would be barely discernible and it is not inconceivable that the ambivalence was intentional. From the standpoint of Hephaestus, who is angry (cf. 303, 304, 314), the situation is no laughing matter. He constructed the net in order to prevent the adulterers from running away (cf. 275), and now calls on the other gods to witness how they are caught en flagrant délit. To him the opposition between himself, ‘feeble-footed’ (311), and Ares, ‘beautiful and firm-footed’ (310), is a source of bitterness; it is because of this opposition that Aphrodite ‘always’ (the typical *‘always’ of quarrels) holds him in little favour and loves Ares. The other gods, however, see the humorous side of the matter and in a mocking *actual tis-speech † give a positive twist to the opposition; lame or not, slow Hephaestus has been able to catch Ares, fastest of all the gods (328–33). They present the moral of the events in the form of two *gnomic utterances: ‘evil does not prosper’ and ‘the slow one catches the quick one’; the paradox is reinforced by the juxtaposition of βραδύς ὦκυν. Their laughter in 326–7 is an instance of ‘Schadenfreude’: they laugh in mockery of their fellow-gods, who are
trapped in an embarrassing (Aphrodite) and humiliating (Ares) situation.\textsuperscript{19} They laugh a second time in 343, because of the following ‘sketch’ between Apollo and Hermes: ‘Would you, despite the fastenings, like to lie in bed with Aphrodite?’: ‘O yes, even if there were thrice as many fastenings and all the gods and goddesses (now still absent) were watching’ (334–42). This is a liberating laughter, of the type found in \textit{II}. 1.599–600, where (after the tension created by the quarrel between Zeus and Hera) the gods laugh at the cripple Hephaestus as he performs the task of a cupbearer, a function normally reserved for beautiful youngsters.

\textbf{321–4} Describing the execution of Hephaestus’ order in 306–7 (‘Zeus and other gods, come over here . . .’), the narrator uses refrain-composition \textsuperscript{†} (three times repeated ηλθε; cf. 3.430–6) to announce the three male gods who will play a role in the ensuing scene. For the prudery of the goddesses, cf. Hera’s (feigned) qualms in \textit{Il}. 14.330–6.

\textbf{351} Hephaestus backs up his refusal to obey Poseidon and free Ares with a *gnomic utterance: ‘pledges for worthless people are worthless’ (note the repetition of δειλά . . . δειλ«ν).

\textbf{360–6} The story ends with a natural closure: the two gods who have been punished flee to their favourite haunts to ‘lick their wounds’; for endings of embedded narratives, cf. 7.297n.

\textbf{364–6} A divine – and abbreviated – variant of the *‘bathing’ type-scene. Adornment usually takes place before a seduction, not after it. Here it serves a different function, viz., to restore Aphrodite’s self-confidence and (in the eyes of the mortal singer/narrator Demodocus) her divine glory, as the expression θαυμάζει ἰδέσθαι, ‘a marvel to behold’, suggests (cf. 6.306n.); cf. the ‘restoration’ of Ares in \textit{Il}. 5.905–6 after his wounding by a mortal.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{367–448} The reconciliation. Demodocus’ song having restored the friendly atmosphere (Odysseus ‘enjoys’ the song as much as the Phaeacians: 367–9, contrast 83–95 and 521–31), Odysseus and Alcinous take turns in the process of reconciliation. Alcinous starts by having two of his sons give a solo dance performance (370–80; one of the dancers is Laodamas, who was involved in the quarrel). This time (cf. 256–65) Odysseus gives expression to his admiration, explicitly confirming that Alcinous’ earlier claim about the excellence of Phaeacian dancing is indeed valid (381–4); in this way

\textsuperscript{19} Halliwell (1991).

\textsuperscript{20} Griffin (1980: 199–201).
Phaeacian honour is saved. Alcinous reacts joyfully and takes the next step, (A) suggesting that the Phaeacian kings offer the stranger a guest-gift and (B) ordering Euryalus to make amends to the stranger by word and gift (385–97). His orders are executed in – a variant on the – parallel form †: (A') the Phaeacian kings send out heralds to collect gifts (399). (B') Euryalus apologizes in a ‘farewell’ speech (400–16; note the repetition of the verb ἀφοίροςκειν, ‘to make amends’, in 396, 402, and 415, which underscores the almost ritual nature of the apology). (A") Then the gifts are ready and brought to the palace by heralds (417–20; the detail that the sons of Alcinous actively participate in the collection of the stranger’s guest-gifts is a sign of the increase in status the mysterious guest has undergone). The giving of gifts by Alcinous and Arete is narrated in a separate scene (421–48), in accordance with their status: Alcinous not only gives Odysseus the prescribed mantle and chiton (cf. 392), but asks Arete to give him a mantle, a chiton, and a chest in which to store his gifts, and himself offers him on the spot (cf. τοῦδε) a golden drinking-cup (i.e., a work of art rather than the prescribed and presumably less precious talent of raw gold: cf. 393). Arete gives the prescribed articles, and accompanies them by good advice.

The speaking of words of farewell and the giving of guest-gifts reinforces the suggestion that Odysseus will depart that evening; cf. Introduction.

371 An abbreviated version of the *‘no other could vie with X in . . .’ motif.

389–93 Alcinous’ suggestion that the Phaeacian kings should offer Odysseus guest-gifts means the fulfilment of – part of – Zeus’ plan in 5.36–40. The giving of guest-gifts is a regular component of a ‘visit’ type-scene, but here more is at stake; the gifts are intended to compensate Odysseus for the loss of his Trojan War booty and thus are an important element in the process of boosting his heroic ego; cf. Introduction to 6. He earns his first set of gifts on account of his athletic prowess, but perhaps even more for his polite praise of the Phaeacian dancing. A second set of gifts will be earned by him as a result of his skill as a story-teller (promise 11.339–41 and 351–2; execution: 13.7–22). At that point he himself explicitly acknowledges the importance of the gifts in restoring his status, now that he is about to return to Ithaca (11.356–61). Indeed, after his return, the gifts will continue to occupy his mind until they are safely stored; cf. 13.120–4n.
399–418 The scene in which Euryalus apologizes covers the time it takes the heralds to get the gifts; an instance of the ‘fill-in’ technique †.

401–6 Euryalus’ gift, a sword, has symbolic significance; it means that he now acknowledges the heroic status of the stranger, which he previously (158–67) questioned. For the first time in years Odysseus has a sword over his shoulder, marking the recovery of his heroic self-confidence.

408–15 Euryalus’ apology and Odysseus’ acceptance of that apology are contained in a set of ‘farewell’ speeches (cf. χαίρε in 408 and 413); cf. 5.203–13; 8.461–8; 13.38–46, 59–62; 15.111–29, and 151–9. These usually occur in pairs, one by the host and one by the visitor, and contain wishes for the well-being of the guest (safe return) and the host (various). In the present case, Euryalus’ wish for the stranger’s safe return to his wife and fatherland ‘because for a long time now you are suffering sorrows far away from your φίλοι’ (410–11) has an additional significance, since earlier, when he challenged him, he was oblivious to the stranger’s plight. Odysseus’ return wish in part mirrors his earlier wish for the joint Phaeacian nobles (‘may the gods grant you prosperity’: 413; cf. 7.148), but has also been especially coined to suit the gift he has just received (‘may you never long for this sword back’, i.e., get into a situation in which you need it: 414–15).

424–32 Alcinous’ speech, in which he offers his own and his wife’s guest-gifts, at the same time is a *table of contents speech, informing the narratees about the upcoming events: bath and presentation of chest (433–69), meal (470–84), and song (485–535).

431–2 An instance of the *‘a guest will remember his host at home’ motif.

433–69 This is the largest *‘bathing’ type-scene in the Odyssey: heating of water (433–49; split up into order and execution. This detail is found only in Il. 18.343–8: bath water for the corpse of Patroclus; 22.442–6: Andromache in vain heating water for Hector; and Od. 10.358–60: Circe heating water for her lover Odysseus. In all these cases, it marks the care and affection of the person offering the bath; in the present instance, it also reflects the Phaeacian fondness for hot baths and anticipates Odysseus’ joyous reaction); (i) stepping into the bathtub (450a); Odysseus’ joyous reaction (450b–453; unique addition, which tunes in with 6.220n.); (ii) washing (449 + 454a); (iii) anointing (454b); (iv) clothing (455); (v) stepping out of the bathtub (456a) and going to the men (addition); Nausicaa, standing near the door admires Odysseus’ freshly bathed appearance and a farewell ensues (457–68; unique addition); (vi) he sits down next to Alcinous (469).
434 ὅτι τὰχιστα, ‘as soon as possible’, belongs to the character-language †: here and II. 9.659 in embedded focalization, eight times in direct speech.

438–48 The narrator explicitly notes that the little scene between Arete and ‘the stranger’, in which she gives him her gifts and advice (cf. 367–448n.) takes place while the water is getting warm. This is one of the few instances of (small-scale) simultaneity in the Homeric epics; cf. Appendix B. Other instances in the Odyssey are: 3.303–5, 464–5; 4.435–6; 5.246, 258, 424–5; 9.47–50; 10.125–7, 348–9, 449–51, 569–74; 12.166–7, 244–6; 17.358; 23.289–90; and 24.365–7. Narrators can also suggest simultaneity by quickly switching from one scene to the next, a special application of the ‘interlace’ technique †; cf. 4.625–857 and 17.492–606nn. Often the simultaneity creates a special effect, such as pathos, tension, or dramatic irony.

442–8 *Arete’s reputation as an upholder of law and order is confirmed when she exhorts Odysseus to seal his box with a knot against thieves during his sleep (the *‘sleep’ motif). Having arrived on Ithaca, the first thing which Odysseus will do is to check whether the Phaeacians have taken any of his possessions (13.215–19).

448 The detail of Circe teaching Odysseus to tie a special knot is not told at its ‘proper’ place, as part of the ‘Circe’ episode of Book 10, but here, where it is more effective; an instance of paralipsis †. This is one of the places where the narrator authenticates Odysseus’ Apologue; cf. Introduction to 9. Dropping Circe’s name also serves another purpose; cf. 457–68n.

452–3 For the dropping of Calypso’s name, cf. next note.

457–68 Nausicaa’s farewell is one of three farewells between Odysseus and a woman who loves him; cf. 5.149–227n. The narratees are referred to the two other women by the casual dropping of their names just prior to this scene (448 and 452–3). Both are recalled in a positive way, in their function of Odysseus’ helpers (rather than lovers, and hence a potential danger); this is also the function of Nausicaa which is stressed (462, 468). As in the case of Calypso, Odysseus has to employ the necessary tact. Unlike Calypso, Nausicaa is very shy and leaves her true feelings unsaid.

Nausicaa’s curtain call comes as a surprise; it had not been hinted at by the

21 Bassett (1938: 38–9) and Richardson (1990: 95).

narrator or mentioned by Alcinous in his ‘table of contents’ speech in 424–32. Indeed, we had just been told that after his bath Odysseus went ‘to join the men at their wine drinking’ (456–7).

In her *‘farewell’* speech Nausicaa skips the usual wish for the guest’s safe return home and immediately asks the stranger to remember her at home, because he owes her a reward for saving his life (surely the most touching instance of the *‘a guest will remember his host at home’* motif). In his answer Odysseus himself voices the wish for his safe return (which he tactfully specifies as a desire for his *oikos* rather than for his wife, as did Euryalus just before in 410; cf.1.13n.), and then reacts to Nausicaa’s wish, surpassing her formulations: at home he will pray to her as to a god. He – uniquely – ends his speech with a vocative (‘girl’), which may suggest a solemn or affective tone.

Odysseus will not, strictly speaking, keep the promise he makes here: when he recounts his adventures to Penelope in Book 23, he never mentions Nausicaa. This is not forgetfulness, but part of the conscious ‘editing’ of his travel story, in particular where his dealings with women are concerned; cf. 23.310–41n. Indirectly, he does remember Nausicaa, whom he introduces – in the guise of a prince – in one of his lying tales (14.317–20).

This exchange not only recalls the first meeting between Nausicaa and Odysseus (with the girl speaking self-consciously as a princess and the elder man flattering the girl by comparing her to a god) but also the conversation between Nausicaa and her father in 6.56–67 (both speakers carefully avoiding the topic of the girl’s desire to marry).

469–586 The second ‘banquet’ scene of the day structurally repeats the first (62–103). As usual, the second scene is longer, more intense, and more important: this time (i) it is not a herald who offers the singer food (cf. 69–70) but Odysseus himself, who offers him a choice piece of meat (cf. 4.65–6; 14.437–8); (ii) it is Odysseus rather than the Phaeacians (cf. 90–1), who asks the singer to sing, offering him words of praise; and Odysseus’ tearful reaction to the song is made the subject of a simile; and (iii) Alcinous’ intervention leads, finally, to the disclosure of the stranger’s identity.

The narrator starts the description of the meal not at the beginning, but rather at the point where Odysseus enters; they were ‘already’ serving out the portions (470); cf. 21.245, 393; 23.371 (and cf. ‘still’ in Il. 24.476). In all these cases it can be argued that the word signals implicit embedded focalization †; here Odysseus notices that the portions are being served and intervenes in order to see that Demodocus gets the portion of honour.
Odysseus’ first speech (477–81) consists of an order (the herald is told to give Demodocus the portion of meat he has just cut off) and praise of the singer (which is general: singers are honoured, because the Muse teaches them their song-paths, and indirect: he addresses the herald). It forms the prelude to his second speech. This (487–98) consists of praise (which is now direct: he addresses Demodocus himself, specific: he praises the veracity of his first song, and even more complimentary: Demodocus must have been taught by the Muse or even by Apollo himself) and a request (he asks him to sing about the Wooden Horse), which are linked to each other at the end (‘if you will fulfil my request adequately, I will praise you even more’).

His second speech marks a decisive step in the process of Odysseus’ gradual revelation; cf. Introduction to 7. Once more (cf. 219–20) he makes clear that he has participated in the Trojan War. Next, when asking Demodocus to sing about the Trojan horse, Odysseus mentions for the first time his own name (494). This is a phenomenon found in all Odysseus’ ‘delayed recognition’ scenes: the hero obliquely refers to himself, using his own name, prior to revealing himself; cf. 16.100, 104; 18.24, 313, 384–6; 21.195, 197; and 24.269–70. Finally, his request for the story of one of Odysseus’ tricks prepares for his self-introduction in 9.19–20: ‘I am Odysseus, known amongst all for his tricks.’

480–1 An instance of the ‘gift of the gods’ motif; cf. 2.116–18n.

487–91 Odysseus’ words can be taken as *metanarrative, an important testimony on the ‘truth’ of epic song. The Homeric epics distinguish between five kinds of narratives: (i) lying tales (which are nearly always explicitly marked as such); cf. 13.253–86n.; (ii) rumours based on hearsay, i.e., stories which may be true, but the truth of which cannot be vouched for by the speaker, e.g., 1.189–93; 3.184–98; (iii) stories of old, which everyone knows from hearsay (‘myths’) e.g., the ‘Meleager’ story in II. 9.527–99; (iv) narratives recounted by eye-witnesses, which are ‘true’, e.g., 3.130–88; 4.240–64, 266–89; and Books 9–12; and (v) songs by professional singers, who, although they are not eyewitnesses themselves, attain the same status (cf. 491: ‘as if you had been present yourself or had heard it from someone [who had been present]’) via their association with the Muses, who are witness to everything in history (cf. II. 2.485–6).

23 Harrison (1971).
The word ‘truth’ does not imply historical accuracy, but rather a vivid evocation (what rhetorical theory later would come to describe as *enargeia*): the task of professional singers was to preserve people’s memory of the great deeds of men and gods (cf. 1.338). They did this by bringing alive the past (e.g., by frequently allowing the heroes themselves to speak) and transporting their audiences back to that past (by narrating events so graphically that they felt as if they were almost eyewitnesses themselves). This evocative conception of epic poetry, in combination with its entertainment function (cf. 83–92n.), leaves the door open for amplification and invention. Indeed, if we look at the freedom with which *characters* relate the past (e.g., in the case of the ‘Oresteia’ story), without either narrator or characters remarking on differences between the various versions, we may assume that, even though we have only his version and he makes no explicit references to other versions, the *narrator* likewise felt free to expand, adapt, or complement his story (provided he did not change its core, which was quite small presumably: in the case of Odysseus, it may have comprised no more than the hero’s successful return home after twenty years).

488  An instance of the *‘gift of the gods’ motif.*

489–90  Odysseus – typically (cf. 3.103–17n.) – refers to the Trojan War in negative terms: he speaks of ‘the Achaeans’ doom’ (*ὁτω* in Homer always has a negative tone; in seven out of its eleven occurrences the word is qualified by *κακῶς*) and stresses how much they suffered and had to exert themselves.

492–5  Odysseus’ description of the song which he requests resembles an epic proem (cf. 1.1–10n.): subject in the accusative, followed by an (enjambbed) adjective and relative clauses, and a very general foreshadowing of its content (the Wooden Horse will lead to the fall of Troy).

499–520  Demodocus’ third song. The style of this song is somewhere between the extreme condensation of the first and the leisureed pace of the second. Thus we have a long passage of embedded focalization (506–9), a prolepsis † (510, note the typical *proleptic μελλω*), a comparison (518), and indirect speech (519–20). In contrast to the second song, however, where we almost forget that it is the narrator and not Demodocus who is singing, here the narrator twice recalls that Demodocus is singing (514, 516), briefly returning to a dependent construction (‘he sang *how* they destroyed . . .’; ‘he sang *how* each destroyed another part of town. . .’). Demodocus starts his story not *ab ovo* (e.g., the making of the Wooden
Horse) but in medias res (note ‘already’ in 502); in this he resembles the narrator (cf. 1.10n.).

This is the second time the story of the *Wooden Horse is told in the *Odyssey. As in the other installments, the central hero of the story is Odysseus, the inventor of the stratagem (cf. 494), the leader of the group of men hidden inside (502), and the man who defeats Deiphobus (517–20), the most important Trojan after the death of Hector (cf. 4.276). But in contrast to the other two instances, which recount what happened inside the Horse, the angle chosen here is that of the Trojans, looking at the Horse from the outside; the choice of this perspective and the subsequent account of the destruction of their city (note the repetition of verbs of destruction: 511, 514, 516, and the ominous ‘bearing death and doom’: 513) prepare the ground for the simile of the vanquished Trojan woman.

516–20 Demodocus’ song ends with a climax: Odysseus defeats Deiphobus ‘in what he said to be the grimmest fight’ (516–20); cf. similar endings in 12.258–9 (‘the most pitiful scene’) and II. 6.185 (‘Bellerophon said that that was the fiercest battle he ever fought’). In general for endings of embedded narratives, cf. 7.297n. The indirect speech triggers two instances of character-language †: κεϋθ, ‘there/then’ (only here outside direct speech, where it occurs thirteen times; cf. κεϋσ: twenty-one times in direct speech, κεϋθυν: once in simple narrator-text, ten times in direct speech, ἐκεϋθ and ἐκεύιε: three times in direct speech only) and αἰνότατον, ‘grimmest’ (eleven times in direct speech, once, here, in embedded focalization, and once in simple narrator-text).

521–31 The *effect on Odysseus of Demodocus’ third song is the same as that of his first song (83–92), but this time Odysseus’ weeping is described in stronger terms: ‘he melted’ (522; the metaphor recurs only once, in connection with Penelope: 19.204, 207), his feelings are illustrated by a simile, and his tears are called ‘pitiful’ (ἐλεινόν: 531; cf. 16.219, again after a pathetic simile).

The simile † of the defeated woman (523–31) is surely one of the most impressive and fascinating in the *Odyssey.26 Its primary function is to illustrate Odysseus’ profuse and pitiful weeping; cf. ἐλεινοτάτῳ ὀχεὶ ≈ ἐλεινόν . . . δόκρυ. Its secondary function is to suggest the emotions

---

behind Odysseus’ tears. It is a very striking example of a ‘role reversal’ simile (cf. 5.392–9n.): a man is compared to a woman, a victor (whose victory had just been celebrated) to a victim. Odysseus feels more like a victim than a victor: the aftermath of the war has brought him only ‘hard work and sorrow’; this negative perspective on the Trojan War is typical of all Greek veterans (cf. 3.103–17n.).

In addition to illustrating Odysseus’ assessment of what the war has brought him, the simile may also be taken to reflect his perception of the Trojan victims, the sorrows which he himself, as the man who defeated them, has brought them (that Odysseus is well aware of this perspective appears from 23.306–7, where he recounts to Penelope ‘all the cares he inflicted on other men’; and cf. Alcinous’ interpretation of the stranger’s tears in 578–9: ‘why do you weep over the doom of the Greeks and of Troy?’). His own post-war misery has brought him the kind of objectivity or sensitivity for the condition humaine which Achilles already displayed during the war (cf. II. 24.518–51).

532–86 Events seem to repeat themselves, with Alcinous alone noticing the stranger’s tears and putting an end to Demodocus’ performance (532–6 = 93–7). This time, however, the Phaeacian king, in his third intervention of the day (cf. Introduction), does not ‘play along’ with the stranger and, avoiding any reference to his tears, try to distract him. Instead, revealing his weeping (both now and earlier) to the other Phaeacians (540–1), he asks him for an explanation.

The structure of Alcinous’ long speech is as follows:

(addressing the Phaeacians) Let Demodocus stop singing, so that both hosts and guest enjoy themselves. For because of our guest all these things have been arranged, an escort home and gifts.

To a wise man a guest is (as dear as) a brother (537–47).

(he reinforces his words by a *gnomic utterance)

(turning to the stranger) So (in view of all that we have done for you) it is now time that you no longer hide what I ask you (548–9).

(first question) Tell me your name. For no one is nameless (550–4).

(again he inserts a *gnomic utterance)

(second question) Tell me the name of your home-city, in order that our self-thinking ships can bring you home (555–6).

(digression) For our ships need no steersmen and never suffer harm (557–63).

(second digression, which modifies the previous one) As a matter of fact, my father
once told me that, precisely because we never suffer harm, Poseidon will one day destroy one of our ships. We will see (564–71).

*(third question)* Tell me your adventures (572–6).

(The narratees may note the dramatic irony † of Alcinous unwittingly using formulations which are most appropriate to the traveller Odysseus: lines 573–4 mirror 1.2–3; cf. esp. ἀπεπλάγχθης = πλάγχθη, αὐτοῦς = νόου, πόλιος = ἄστεος; and lines 575–6 repeat verbatim the question posed many times by Odysseus during his travels; cf. 6.119–21n.).

*(fourth question)* Tell me the reason for your grief when hearing about Troy. Did you perhaps lose a kinsman or a friend? For a friend is of no less degree than a brother (577–86).

(another *gnomic utterance)

Alcinous’ speech is a hugely expanded version of the standard question ‘who are you and where are you (presently) coming from, and where are your home-city and your parents?’, the amplification (i) being due to the fact that this is in fact the fourth time the stranger – directly but more often indirectly – is asked for his name (cf. Introduction to 7) and (ii) marking this weighty moment, when Odysseus is finally about to reveal who he is. The Phaeacian king’s request to hear the story of his travels in fact expresses the wish of the narratees, who ever since the proem and the beginning made by Nestor in 3.118–64 (cf. Appendix C) have been waiting for it: ‘after the tantalizing delay we too are intensely interested in the places he has landed, the men and monsters he has encountered, and the obstacles he has overcome’.  

27

Alcinous gives two reasons why the stranger should finally comply with his request for information: he owes it to his hosts in return for their hospitality (544–8; the repetition of κόλλιον: 543 and 549 underscores the fact that the principle of reciprocity is at stake) and his host must know where to take him when escorting him home (556). But his interest is also triggered by genuine affection: he first says that a guest is as dear as a brother (546–7) and at the end of his speech hypothesizes on possible personal losses which the stranger may have suffered in the war (581–6). Thus his speech shows that Odysseus’ and Athena’s wish for Odysseus to become ‘dear’ (φίλος) to the Phaeacians (6.327 and 8.21) has been fulfilled.

Alcinous’ repeated references to the stranger’s pompe (545, 556; cf.

27 Richardson (1990: 184).
Introduction to 7) again suggest the latter’s immediate departure; cf. 26–45n.

548–9 Alcinous’ ‘don’t go on hiding with shrewd mind what I ask you’ now reveals that – though it was nowhere stated – he had realized all along that the stranger was evading the question of his identity. This is an example of the typically Odyssean ‘belated reaction presentation’ device; cf. 16.190–1n.

557–62 For the Phaeacian ships; cf. 7.318–28n.

564–71 Having just told the stranger that the Phaeacian ships ‘never suffer damage’ (πυροσβήνων: 563), Alcinous is reminded of a prophecy by his father Nausithous, who said that Poseidon would be jealous of the Phaeacians precisely because of their reputation for being πομποι ἀπήμωνες, ‘escorts without hurt’, and would one day smite a Phaeacian ship on its way home from a pompe, and put a mountain around their city. At this point the narratees may already have a premonition that the fatal escort will be that of Odysseus, not on account of any prior knowledge, but simply because in a well-constructed story no superfluous details are mentioned. For the Phaeacians themselves, however, that moment of insight does not come until Book 13, when it turns out that Poseidon’s jealousy at the success of mortals (a common epic motif; cf., e.g., 23.210–12) is in fact anger at the Phaeacians for conveying home his arch-enemy; cf. 13.125–87n. On that occasion Alcinous will again recall the prophecy (13.173–8≈8.567–71), his concluding words signalling the difference in perspective before and after the event: in 8.570–1 he still leaves open the possibility that the prophecy may never be fulfilled (ἡ τελεσθεν ἡ κ’ ἀτέλεστ’ εἶη), in 13.178 he concludes with resignation that it has been fulfilled (τελεῖται). We are dealing here with a unique, double version of the *recalled prophecy’ motif.

579–80 Heroic song deals with the ‘famous deeds’ of men and women of the past (cf., e.g., 73). Occasionally, heroic characters reverse the temporal perspective, showing that they are themselves aware that in the future their own or other people’s vicissitudes may become the subject of song: cf. 3.203–4 (Telemachus about Orestes); here (Alcinous about the Trojans); 24.196–202 (Agamemnon about Penelope and Clytemnestra); and II. 6.357–8 (Helen about herself and Paris). The tone is different each time:

28 Maehler (1963: 26, n. 2).
admiring (Telemachus and Agamemnon on Penelope), gloating (Agamemnon on Clytemnestra), bitter (Helen), and consoling (Alcinous).

Alcinous’ words can also be taken as *metanarrative. It is the narrator’s task to make this expectation of the characters come true, for he and his narratees belong to the ‘generations to come’. The narrator sees himself as the last (but not the least significant) element in the following chain: gods (who spin fate)—heroes (who undergo fate)—and narrator (who is not responsible for that fate, cf. 1.347–9, but makes it acceptable for those heroes by celebrating it in song).
This book contains the beginning of the *Apologue*, Odysseus’ narrative of his adventures on the way home from Troy (Books 9–12).\(^1\) In the *Iliad*, too, we find the technique whereby the past – i.e., that part of the fabula † which precedes the main story † – is filled in by characters telling stories; indeed, the technique is a necessary corollary to the *in medias res* device (cf. 1.10n.). What is new in the *Odyssey* is the scale on which this technique is employed: Odysseus’ narrative, which is continuous except for one intermission (11.333–84), takes up 2,140 lines and recounts a period of ten years. This is by far the longest embedded story † in the Homeric epics and, together with his many lying tales, forms the basis for Odysseus’ status as ‘singer’; cf. 11.363–9n.

The *Apologue* is strategically placed: having arrived at the last station of his adventures abroad, Odysseus looks back on his earlier experiences; despite everything, he has managed to survive, thanks to his shrewdness and endurance. This cannot but bolster his—and the narratees’—confidence with regard to his final ‘adventure’, his arrival home. And for the narratees, the *Apologue* finally fills in the missing link in Odysseus’ ‘piecemeally’ presented nostos; cf. Appendix C.

The *Apologue* is firmly anchored into the main narrative. It contains repeated references to Odysseus’ Trojan past: 9.259–66; 10.15, 330–2; 11 *passim*; and 12.189–90. Conversely, the main story contains repeated references to the *Apologue* adventures, which serve to authenticate them: (by the narrator) 1.6–9; 2.17–20; 8.448; (by Zeus) 1.68–71; (by Odysseus) 20.18–21;

---

23.251–3 and 310–41. Thus there is no reason to see Odysseus’ narrative as one of his lying tales; cf. also 11.363–9n.²

The Apologue describes eleven adventures in chronological order; Odysseus cuts short the last adventure (Calypso), because he had already recounted it the night before (7.244–96).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Adventure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.39–66</td>
<td>The Ciconians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.67–81</td>
<td>Storm, followed by adverse winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.82–105</td>
<td>The Lotus-Eaters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.106–566</td>
<td>Cyclops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1–79</td>
<td>Aeolus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.80–134</td>
<td>Laestrygonians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.135–574</td>
<td>Circe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.1–332+385–640</td>
<td>The Underworld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1–143</td>
<td>Circe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.144–200</td>
<td>Sirens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.201–59</td>
<td>Scylla (and Charybdis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.260–425</td>
<td>Thrinacia + storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.426–46</td>
<td>(Scylla and) Charybdis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.447–50</td>
<td>Calypso</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Apologue is not a haphazard collection of adventures but a unified whole, the unifying factors being (i) its form as a *‘catalogue’ narrative; (ii) the cross-references from one adventure to the other; and (iii) the developments which cover more than one adventure. Ad (i): the adventures consist of a series of entries, the first six of which are marked – at the end – by refrain-composition † (‘from there we sailed on with grieving heart’: 9.62 = 105 = 565 = 10.77 = 133) and display a more or less similar structure (introduction of new people, followed by confrontation and escape). Ad (ii): adventures are anticipated in 10.503–40 (Underworld); 11.100–15 (Thrinacia); 12.37–141 (Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, and Thrinacia); and recalled in 9.164–5, 197–211 (Ciconians); 10.199–200 (Laestrygonians, Cyclops); 10.435–7 and 12.209–12 (Cyclops). Ad (iii): Odysseus gradually loses his twelve ships (cf. Íl. 2.637) and his companions, so that at the end of his story (and the beginning of the Odyssey) he is alone. His story is an

² Parry (1994) and Richardson (1996).
instance of the ‘sole survivor’ motif: one person survives a disaster so as to be able to recount it; cf. 10.244–5, *Il.* 4.397; and 12.73. Moreover, Odysseus gradually loses the initiative: in the case of the first six adventures, he is driven by the elements to exotic places but himself chooses to explore them; after Circe, he no longer has a choice, but must endure what she has foretold. Another development is Odysseus’ relationship with his companions. From the very beginning the companions do not always obey (Ciconians) or trust (Aeolus) him and, conversely, Odysseus himself twice does not listen to them (Cyclops). Specifically, there is a growing tension between Odysseus and *Eurylochus, who having unsuccessfully opposed him during the ‘Circe’ episode, finally organizes a disastrous mutiny against him on Thrinacia.

The *Apologue* is an important element in the characterization of *Odysseus. Throughout we see him displaying his characteristic solicitude as a leader: he is always trying to save his men and is greatly grieved when he loses one of them (10.273; 11.55; 12.111–26, 258–9); cf. *Il.* 3.196, where Odysseus is compared to a ram who keeps his flock together. During his adventures he is confronted with the limits of the heroic code (9.224–30, 317, 474–505; 12.111–26, and 226–33), and perverse and frightening variations on the rules of hospitality (guests are offered dangerous food: Lotus-Eaters and Circe; instead of being offered food, they become food: Polyphemus and Laestrygonians; Polyphemus’ and Aeolus’ *pompe* actually prevents Odysseus’ return home; and the overzealous hospitality of Calypso also delays the hero’s return). These experiences reinforce certain traits already inherent in his character – to use guile instead of force, to endure humiliations and setbacks, and to keep silent – which will be of prime importance in the second half of the *Odyssey*.

The *Apologue* is a first-person narrative, i.e., a narrative in which the narrator is internal, himself plays a role in the events (contrast the external primary narrator: 1.1–10n.). The characteristics of this type of narration are: (i) restriction of place (the narrator can only be present in one place; (ii) restriction of access (the narrator cannot read the minds of other people); (iii) restriction of understanding (the narrator does not have the same knowledge as the omniscient primary narrator); and (iv) a subjective style. Ad (i): the restriction of place is of no great importance, since Odysseus is the

hero of the story and is usually there where the action is. In those cases where he is not present, he makes use of hindsight knowledge to complete his story: 10.103–17 (the Laestrygonians, about whom he may be expected to have received a report from the two survivors: 117); 10.208–43 (the first confrontation with Circe, about which he is informed by Eurylochus: 251–60); and 12.374–88 (the Olympian conversation, about which he is informed by Calypso, who heard it from Hermes: 389–90). His knowledge of what his companions said during his sleep in 10.34–46 and 12.339–51 is left unexplained. We may assume that his – or the primary narrator’s – desire to expose the foolishness of his companions has overruled narrative logic.

Ad (ii): the fact that Odysseus cannot read other people’s minds is not necessarily a disadvantage; it means that the narratees † (both internal and external) are told only what he thought and felt, which is likely to increase their affinity with him. Once Odysseus reads the minds of his companions (10.415–17); his knowledge can be seen as hindsight, since in 419–20 his companions describe their feelings to him. In 9.419 Odysseus infers Polyphemus’ thoughts (note πον, ‘I guess’). His reading of Eurylochus’ mind in 10.448 remains unexplained. Again, his desire to expose the abject nature of his companion’s thoughts overrules narrative logic.

Ad (iii): the restriction of understanding concerns mainly the role of the gods: according to ‘Jörgensen’s law’, Odysseus ascribes unexpected luck or disaster to Zeus or an unspecified god (θεός, θεό, δείμων), where the omniscient narrator would have identified the god: 9.52, 67, 142, 158, 339, 381; 10.141, 157; 12.169, 295, 313, 338, 371–2, 445, and 448 (and cf. 9.15 and 38). Only in the case of the storm after Thrinacia are Odysseus’ references to Zeus (12.405, 415, 416, 419) specific and based on hindsight: he knows about Zeus’s role from Circe; cf. 12.374–90n. Odysseus’ knowledge that Poseidon heard Polyphemus’ prayer (9.536) is due to hindsight (in 11.101–3 he hears about *Poseidon’s wrath from Tiresias). For his claim that Zeus rejected his sacrifice after his escape from Polyphemus, cf. 9.551–5n. His knowledge of Hermes’ identity is unexplained; cf. 10.275–309n. Another type of restricted understanding is found in 9.337–9, where he is not sure whether an action taken by Polyphemus was his own idea or was inspired by a god.

Ad (iv): the subjective style means that there are many instances of character-language †: ἄρεις, ‘better’ (9.48; seventeen times speech, once simple

---

narrator-text), κοκός, ‘evil’ (9.52, 316, 423, 440; 10.46, 54, 122, 213; 238 times
in speech, nineteen times in embedded focalization, and forty-six times in
simple narrator-text), σινόμορος, ‘unfortunate’ (9.53; speech only, three
times); δειλός (9.65; 11.19; thirty-five times in speech, three times in embed-
ded focalization, twice in simple narrator-text, both times similes); θυμόν
έδωτες, ‘eating our hearts out’ (9.75; speech only, four times), ἀσκηθής,
‘unscathed’ (9.79; speech only, eight times), ἀλος, ‘destructive’ (9.82;
11.19), ὑπερφίλας, ‘overbearing’ (9.106), πελαρχος, ‘gigantic’ (9.187 and
11.572; seventeen times speech, three times embedded focalization, five
times simple narrator-text), ἁγήνωρ, ‘manly, proud’ (9.213), νηλής, ‘piti-
less’ (9.272, 287, 368; νηλής used of persons is confined to speech, eight
times), σχέτλιος, ‘unbearable’ (9.295), ἄφραξ-, ‘thoughtlessness’, ‘folly’
(9.361), τετλητίθενθα θυμό, ‘with daring/steadfast mind’ (9.435; nine times in
speech), πατρίς (10.29, 33, 49), ἀτερτ-, ‘gruesome’ (10.124), κῆδιστος,
‘dearest’ (10.225; three times in speech), κεννότατος, ‘most attached’
(10.225; three times in speech), αἰθρείη, ‘heedlessness’ (10.231; four times in
speech), οὐλόμενος, ‘deadly’ (10.394; thirteen times speech, once simple
narrator-text), ἀπτήμων, ‘unharmed, doing no harm’ (10.551), θυμολέων,
‘with a lion heart’ (11.267; five times in speech), αἰνη δηις θή, ‘horrid fight-
ing’ (12.257; ten times speech, twice embedded focalization, once simple
narrator-text), οἰκτιστός, ‘most pitiful’ (12.258; six times in speech), οἴπγς
δέλθρος, ‘steep disaster’ (12.446; fourteen times in speech; twice in simple
narrator-text).

In marked contrast to the primary narrator, Odysseus-narrator has a
habit of inserting an explicit characterization † of people at the beginning of
(Polyphemus); 10.1–13 (Aeolus), 82–6 (Laestrygonians), and 135–9 (Circe).
After that, the introductions are provided by Circe; cf. 12.37–141n. These
introductions are based on hindsight knowledge, since at the beginning of
each adventure Odysseus-hero does not know where he is or whom he is
going to face (cf. 9.88–9, 174–6, 10.101, 190–2); cf. his early description of
Goat-Island (9.116–41), given at the occasion of his landing there on a
moonless night (142–8), but surely based on hindsight (not until the next
day does he explore the island: 152–3). Not seldom, however, Odysseus tells
more about people than he can possibly have learned during his brief stay. If

we add to this the fact that almost all the descriptions, whether given by Odysseus or by Circe, are in the present tense (often + epic τε), this suggests that these are mythical people (cf. the Aethiopians in 1.22–3, and contrast the past tenses in the Catalogue of Ships in Il. 2.494ff.), who existed before Odysseus and will continue to do so after he leaves, and with whom he is acquainted from stories; cf. also κλίτως, ‘famous’, in 10.60, 87, 114. The effect of these early introductions is to bias his narratees against his opponents, to increase their admiration for the way in which he succeeds in overcoming them, and to gain their sympathy when he loses some of his men to them.

In general, Odysseus narrates according to his narrating focalization, i.e., his focalization at the moment of narration, when he has the benefit of hindsight: the instances listed above can be expanded to include his numerous ominous prolepses: 9.230, 551–5; 10.26–7; and 12.295. Occasionally, however, he suppresses his hindsight knowledge and narrates according to his experiencing focalization, i.e., his focalization in the past, when he was undergoing the events: cf. 84 (he leaves out the dangerous nature of the Lotus-Eaters’ flowery diet), 106–15 (he leaves out the cannibalistic nature of the Cyclops) and 10.80–134 (he leaves out the cannibalistic nature of the Laestrygonians); revealing these charged pieces of information only later, he springs a surprise on his narratees and engages them even more in his story.

The ‘argument’ function of this long tale is to give Alcinous (and the other Phaeacians) the information he has asked for; cf. 1–38n. In this particular case, the tale also has an ‘argument’ function for the narrating character himself: recalling in detail his past adventures, Odysseus is confronted with many instances of his own courage, endurance and, above all, wiliness. Thus his narrating activity is the culmination of the long process whereby the hero regains his confidence and identity; cf. Introduction to 6. Does it also have a ‘key’ function? We see an Odysseus who does his utmost to save his men. When despite his efforts he loses all his ships and men, this is, with one exception (his desire to meet the Cyclops: 9.228), not his fault, but is either force majeure (he loses the most men and ships through the monstrous Laestrygonians) or the fault of his companions (cf. 9.44; 10.26–7, 46, 79; 12.278, 300, 339). This is essentially the same picture which the narrator presents – in summarized form – in his proem (1.5–8). Thus the Apologue also seems intended (i) to ‘plug’ Odysseus the good leader, by way of antidote to any negative associations his upcoming murder of the Suitors might have
(cf. 1.224–9n.), and (ii) to illustrate, in the person of the foolish companions, the moralistic principle which also underlies the upcoming death of the Suitors (with whom they share the negative qualifications *νηγτιος and *δτασθαλια): mortals who act recklessly despite warnings themselves incur their death (cf. 1.29–43n.).

Book 9 contains three adventures, two short (Ciconians, Lotus-Eaters) and one long (Cyclops).

1–38 In the opening section of his speech (until the narrative begins: 39) Odysseus reacts to Alcinous’ speech 8.536–86, in particular the set of four questions which the king had put to him:

3–15 Instead of answering Alcinous’ fourth question (‘why do you weep?’: 8.577–86), Odysseus one last time (cf. Introduction to 7) shows a reluctance to talk about himself, because this would only make him weep more.

16–20 The answer to Alcinous’ first question (‘what is your name?’: 8.550–4).

21–36 The answer to Alcinous’ second question (‘what is your home-city?’: 8.555–6).

37–8 Announcement of the Apologue, which will form the detailed answer to Alcinous’ third question (‘which countries have you visited?’: 8.572–6).

3–15 In this *emotional preamble, with which Odyssean narratives usually begin, Odysseus contrasts the merry storytelling of a singer like Demodocus, which forms one of the ‘best’ things in life (3–11; the passage is marked off by ring-composition: κωλον ≈ καλλιστον) with his own sad storytelling (12–15). It is both difficult and painful to tell the tale Alcinous wants to hear, because there are so many sorrows to recount (14; for the ‘aporia’ motif, cf. Il. 5.703–4; 11.299–300; and 16.692–3). Odysseus’ kind words about singers, which continue 8.477–81 and 487–98, are also (i) an apology to Demodocus for the fact that the latter’s song, which he himself had asked for, has been interrupted because of him; and (ii) one of the many passages in which the Odyssean narrator, himself a professional singer, has his own profession celebrated; cf. Introduction to 8.

13 For the association ὃδυριματι-Odysseus, cf. 1.48–62n.

19–20 This important moment, when Odysseus finally reveals his name (cf. Introduction to 7), is marked by the unusual initial position of ειμι; the
only other instances are 6.196; 24.304; and II. 21.154. Odysseus has three possible self-introductions: as Trojan hero (cf. 504–5, and Penelope in 4.725–6 = 815–16), as a man who has suffered much (cf. 16.205–6n.), and as a man of tricks. His choice of the third option here is determined by Demodocus’ song in 8.499–520, which recounted the story of his master-trick, the Wooden Horse. His proud claim that his fame has reached ‘heaven’ – contrast Penelope’s more moderate ‘Hellas and midmost Argos’: 4.726 – is confirmed by the fact that it has even reached the isolated Phaeacians.

Homer characters are much concerned about their kleos, ‘reputation’ or ‘fame’. In the Iliad, kleos is gained primarily on the basis of martial feats, while in the Odyssey the range is broadened to encompass not only martial feats (cf. 1.298, 344; 3.204; 4.726; 9.264; 16.241), but also adventurous trips (1.95; 3.78; 13.422), marital loyalty (cf. 6.185; 24.196), hospitality (3.380; 7.333; 19.333), wiliness (here and 16.241), beauty (18.255), athletic prowess (8.147), and song (8.74). Kleos is typically preserved by grave mounds (cf. 1.239–40 = 14.369–70; 4.584; 11.72–6; and 24.80–94; and II. 7.86–91) and heroic song (cf. 3.203–4 and 24.196–202).

21–7 This is the second time Ithaca is described; cf. 4.602–8n. Odysseus mentions only one of the standard elements, its ‘ruggedness’ (27), but introduces geographical information (the ‘conspicuous’ mountain Neritus) and topographical information (the position of the island in relation to other islands). After all, his addressees and future escorts, the Phaeacians, have to know where to take him.

27–36 Odysseus’ factual description of Ithaca ends in a passionate declaration of love for his fatherland and his parents, the latter perhaps being triggered by Ithaca’s qualification as κουροτρόφως, ‘rearing youths’; for the various ways in which he specifies his desire to return home, cf. 1.13n. The sentiment ‘there is no place like home’, framed by ring-composition (οὐ... γλυκερώτερον = οὐδέν γλύκιον), is backed up by the argument that not even goddesses could persuade him to stay with them. For purposes of emphasis, Circe and Calypso are each awarded their own – in part identical – two lines, the parallelism involving a slight inconsistency (Circe never wanted to make Odysseus her husband; cf. 10.455–66n.). This emotional outburst (i) makes clear why the story of his endlessly prolonged nostos is

---

such a sad one for Odysseus; (ii) reminds his benefactors of the importance of their promise to bring him home; and (iii) provides another – indirect – rejection of the suggestion made by Alcinous the night before, viz. a marriage between ‘the stranger’ and his daughter (cf. 7.331–3n.).

37–8 Odysseus’ announcement resembles an epic proem: subject in accusative, adjective, verb of speaking, relative clause with additional information, and starting-point; cf. 1.1–10n. What is missing is a Muse-invocation. But then Odysseus is not a professional singer. In fact, although he is repeatedly compared to a singer (cf. 11.363–9n.), he does not sing at all, as Achilles does in II. 9.189: he does not employ a lyre and his speeches are introduced and capped with verbs of speaking (cf. προσέφη: 9.1 and 11.377, and ἐφανθ’: 11.333 = 13.1), not of singing.

39–66 Odysseus begins with the adventure of the Ciconians. What went before, the collective phase of the Greeks’ return, has already been revealed to the primary narratees † by Nestor (3.130–64), and therefore is left out here, in keeping with the ‘avoidance of overlap’ principle; cf. Appendix C.

The first adventure is Iliadic in flavour (42≈II. 11.705, 54–5≈II. 18.533–4, 56=II. 11.84, 58–9≈II. 16.779–80) and describes regular heroic events, involving ‘historical’ people (the Ciconians fought on the Trojan side; cf. II. 2.846; 17.73) in a known part of the world (Thrace). Thus this episode forms the transition to the fairy-tale world which follows. It is an anticipatory doublet † of the Thrinacia adventure, in that the companions do not listen to Odysseus’ warnings and slaughter cattle. Elements of the story will be ‘recycled’ by Odysseus in one of his lying tales (14.259–72).

This tale displays an interesting pattern with respect to Odysseus’ use of the personal pronoun: the wind drove me to Ismarus (having been alone for so long, Odysseus-narrator seems to think automatically in solitary terms); I sacked their city and killed the inhabitants (pride of the general); we divided up the booty; I urged them to flee but they did not listen (opposition between sensible leader and foolish men); we were struck down by fate (Odysseus shares in the misery of his men); the two parties fought (objective report); we stood fast (pride), but then the Ciconians turned the Achaeans back (objective report); many died but the rest of us escaped (Odysseus shares in the rescue).

39 The beginning of the narrative (‘Ἀλιόθεν) mirrors an element from Odysseus’ ‘proem’ (Προήθεν: 38); cf. ἔριδι in II. 1.8 picking up ἐρίσαντε in the proem (6).
45 Odysseus mentions the drinking of wine, but leaves out the fact that he himself obtained very special wine from the Ciconian priest Maron. This detail is saved for a more appropriate place, when the wine is about to play a role in the ‘Cyclops’ episode (196–215); an example of paralipsis †. We will be reminded of the Ciconian wine in 163–5.

44 The qualification νηπιος, ‘young’, ‘foolish’, is used descriptively (2.313; 4.31, 818; 6.301; 11.449; 18.229; 19.19, 530; 20.310; 21.95), commiseratingly (3.146), derisively (4.371; 9.273, 419, 442; 13.237; 21.85), or critically (1.8; 9.44; 22.32, 370). In its critical sense it is used of the companions (here and in 1.8) and of the Suitors (22.32, 370). It belongs to the character-language †: seventy-two times in direct speech, twenty-one times in simple narrator-text (in the Odyssey only twice: 1.8; 22.32, both passages where the narrator steps forward).

47–50 The device of *simultaneity adds to Odysseus’ critical tone: while his foolish men were feasting, the Ciconians rallied help.

60–1 At the end of the episode Odysseus draws up the sad balance of this adventure; cf. 10.131–2. Six is a typical number † for casualties in the Apologue; cf. 12.110 and 246.

67–73 A sober *storm’ scene. We find the stock elements of wind, divine source (Zeus), clouds, darkness, destruction of sails, and landing.

74–81 Although he manages to survive the storm (the use of a summary † in 74–5 has a pathetic effect: for two days at a stretch the Greeks are unable to do anything but lie there, overcome by exhaustion and sorrow), he is driven off course again near Cape Malea (cf. 4.514n.), i.e., ‘within sight of the harbour’ (cf. 5.279–81n.). The pathos of the situation is heightened by an ‘if not’-situation †: ‘and now I would have reached my fatherland, but…’.

82–105 Second adventure: the Lotus-Eaters. Four of Odysseus’ adventures (2, 3, 5, 6; cf. Introduction) display the same typical structure:9 (i) landing, often including an introduction of new persons and places (83–5); (ii) initial activities, such as fetching water, eating, or sleeping (85–7); (iii) exploration of the new territory, in search of signs of habitation (-); (iv) sending out of scouts to determine the nature of the inhabitants (88–90); (v) dangerous confrontation (91–7); (vi) rescue of companions by Odysseus (98–102); and (vii) departure (103–5).

---

9 Arend (1933: 80–1, 85).
The Lotus-Eaters are not violent hosts (92–3; contrast 10.115), but their idea of hospitality – offering food which makes guests forget their nostos (as Odysseus repeats three times: 95, 97, 102) – is nevertheless a danger for Odysseus and his men; an instance of the *‘forgetting-remembering’ motif. In his introduction of the Lotus-Eaters – which is based on hindsight knowledge – Odysseus mentions their flowery diet, but does not reveal the dangerous nature of this diet. He only does so in 94–7, when his men are about to succumb to it; cf. Introduction.

82 Sometimes Odysseus specifies the number of days they voyage between one adventure and the next. Those tempted to use these figures to reconstruct Odysseus’ travels should be aware that we are dealing with typical numbers †: ‘for six days . . . and on the seventh . . .’ (10.80; cf. 14.249 and 15.476) and ‘for nine days . . . and on the tenth . . .’ (9.82; 10.28; 12.447; cf. 7.253 and 14.314).

106–566 Third adventure: the Cyclops.10 This is one of the most important of all Odysseus’ adventures: it is told in great detail, and later used as a paradigm by Odysseus: 12.208–12 and 20.18–21. It shows us *Odysseus at his worst (his desire for guest-gifts and his vaunting after his victory), and at his best (his foresight in taking along strong wine, the way he sees through the Cyclops’ false questions, his getting the giant drunk in order to blind him, the ‘No One’ trick, and the escape under the bellies of the sheep). It deals with three central issues of the Odyssey: *‘cunning versus force’ (cf. esp. 396–414n., 507–16n.), hospitality (cf. 195–542n.), and ‘delayed recognition’ (cf. 195–542n.). A theme which is specific to this adventure is the opposition ‘nature–culture’. Ad *‘nature’. The Cyclopes have no community life (no laws: 106, 112, 428, no assemblies: 112, no social organization larger than the family: 114–15), no planned agriculture (they rely on the gods to see that everything grows: 107–11; cf. also the revealing detail of the dung of the Cyclops’ herds, left lying all over his cave: 328–30 versus that of Odysseus’ herds, which is collected outside the gate of his palace and used to manure his fields: 17.297–9), and no technology (no ships: 125–9, they live in mountain caves: 113–14). Polyphemus is even more ‘wild’ (215; cf. 2.19), in that he lives alone (187–92); he is revealingly compared to a mountain peak (191–2) and a lion (291–3). The Cyclopes’ naturalness also has some positive aspects:

---

the way in which their cereals and vines grow for them without effort resembles a ‘golden-age’ existence (107–11; cf. Alcinous’ garden: 7.112–32; it is perhaps for this reason that they are called ‘close to the gods’: 7.206), while Polyphemus is an accomplished dairymen (218–23, 244–50; note Odysseus’ approving focalization in 218: ‘we admired’ and 245: ‘all in due order’). Ad ‘culture’. Odysseus looks at Goat-Island with the eyes of a settler (116–41), expertly prepares a weapon out of a piece of wood (325–8), and thrice uses comparisons which involve culture (321–4, 384–8 and 391–4) in connection with his own actions.

The picture of Polyphemus is ambivalent: on the one hand, he is a monster, whose every word and deed is a mockery of the rites of hospitality. On the other hand, he is a pitiful victim: his blinding is described so elaborately as to elicit pity, and his address to his ram is pathetic.

The Cyclops is explicitly introduced by Odysseus long before he enters upon the scene (in 233): 106–15 (Cyclopes in general), 182–92, and 214–15. This is something Odysseus often does in the Apologue (cf. Introduction), but in this case it creates a particularly strong bias against his prospective opponent, who is maligned from the start. He may count on his narratees, the Phaeacians, to share this bias, because of their own unfortunate experiences with the Cyclopes (cf. 6.4–6). The repeated introductions also create tension: what will happen when the Greeks meet this frightening monster? Odysseus-narrator does not announce beforehand that Polyphemus is a cannibal (for a hint, cf. 190–2n.), and his addressees are confronted with this horrible fact as unexpectedly as were Odysseus-hero and his companions at the time. The detailed information about the customs of the Cyclopes and the Cyclops which Odysseus gives surpasses what he can conceivably know from his brief confrontation with them, even if we include his hindsight knowledge (110–11 is explained by what the Cyclops tells him in 357–8; he gets to know the Cyclopes’ lack of rules from the Cyclops’ rude reaction to his appeal to the themis of strangers: 269–78). Presumably, Odysseus knows about them, because they are a ‘mythical’ people; cf. Introduction.

Although in general Odysseus makes lavish use of his hindsight knowledge, he does not do so where the Cyclops’ name is concerned: in 187 and in 214 he speaks of ‘a man’, from 296 onwards he refers to him as ‘the Cyclops’ (after the latter’s self-identification in 275), and not until 407 and 446 does he use the name Polyphemus (after the other Cyclopes had used it: 403).
The episode displays the typical adventure structure (82–105n.), the first four elements showing a particularly close similarity to the ‘Circe’ adventure: (i) divinely assisted landing (cf. 10.140–3), including the introduction of the Cyclopes and Goat-Island (106–50); (ii) initial activities, here sleeping (151); (iii) exploration of the new territory, including a divinely assisted hunt (152–69; cf. 10.156–82); (iv) Odysseus sends out scouts (170–95. This element is here doubled, in that in 172–6 Odysseus selects his own ship and in 195 he selects twelve companions; varied, in that Odysseus is one of the party; and expanded, in that Odysseus holds a council to announce the expedition; cf. 10.187–93); (v–vi) dangerous confrontation from which Odysseus eventually rescues his men (196–559); and (vii) departure (560–4).

From the very beginning Odysseus gives a moralistic slant to this adventure: meeting Polyphemus is not – as will be the case in many later adventures – a matter of necessity (Goat-Island has provided the Greeks with enough food), but rather of a conscious desire to find out the nature of the inhabitants of the country they first saw from afar, to learn whether they are without justice or god-fearing (174–6). Although Odysseus’ insistence upon meeting the inhabitant of the cave, to see whether he will give a guest-gift, will prove fatal, it is consistent with this intention (228–9). When, in the absence of the owner, they eat of his cheese, they take care to sacrifice to the gods (231). When, in accordance with his plan in 228–9, Odysseus asks the giant for a guest-gift, he urges the Cyclops to respect the gods, in particular Zeus Ξεινίος (269–71). When the Cyclops eats two of their companions, the Greeks pray to Zeus (294). When he conceives his plan of blinding the Cyclops Odysseus calls it ‘revenge’ and expects Athena to support him (317). He consistently criticizes the Cyclops and his behaviour as σκέτλιος, ‘hard-hearted’ and ‘harsh’ (295, 351, 478) and points out the evil of his behaviour to the monster himself (350–2). Having blinded Polyphemus he claims that this is a divine punishment (475–9). However, when he wants to crown what he considers a justified act of revenge by sacrificing a ram to Zeus, the god rejects the sacrifice (cf. 551–5n.).

106–15 Employing the *‘description by negation’ technique, Odysseus points up the uncivilized nature of the Cyclopes.

116–41 The plot function of Goat-Island\textsuperscript{11} is to provide a safe harbour for the bulk of Odysseus’ fleet. Its detailed description only at the beginning

\textsuperscript{11} Clay (1980) and Byre (1994a).
and end serves this function: in 117 we hear that it is neither close to the land of the Cyclopes (hence safe) nor far (so as to allow the Greeks to see the smoke and hear the bleating of the Cyclops’ sheep: 166–7, which incites them to take a look), while the description of the harbour in 136–41 forms the transition back to the narrative, for it is in this harbour that the Greeks land their ships. The many details provided in between serve to point up the contrast between the primitive Cyclopes (who live near an extremely fertile island, but leave it unexplored) and Odysseus, who immediately realizes its potential. Thus, as usual, the scenery is focalized by a character.\footnote{Elliger (1975: 141–4).} Odysseus is enthusiastic about the island (cf. the potential optatives in 126, 127, 131, 133, 134–5, triple ‘very’, in 133–5, and ‘admiring’ in 153) and surprised at the fact that no one has as yet exploited its possibilities (hence seventeen negations in thirty-six lines). This is the longest Homeric instance of the ‘\textit{description by negation}’ technique, which is employed to define things or conditions which are the reverse of normal, mortal existence (Elysium, life of the gods, exotic countries); cf. 4.566–8, 605–8; 5.400–5, 476–87; 6.41–7; 7.117–19; 9.106–15; 11.14–19; 12.66–107; 13.242–3; and 15.403–14.\footnote{Arist. \textit{Rhet.} III, 1408a1ff., Stierle (1975), Austin (1975: 144–5), Basset (1980), and Davies (1987).} In 154–8 Odysseus will immediately realize one of the island’s potentials, when he shoots some wild goats. As a rule, focalized scenery entails past tenses (cf. 5.63–75n.); here we find present tenses and even epic τε, perhaps because we are dealing with a mythical place.

The description is structurized by refrain-composition $\dagger$: ευ in 118, 132, 134, and 136. The sequence of elements is determined not by their spatial contiguity, but by Odysseus’ associative reasoning: he starts with the island’s most conspicuous characteristic, the presence of countless goats. This fact is then explained by the absence of hunters, which brings him to the absence of farmers. This, in turn, is explained by the fact that the people who live the closest, the Cyclopes, have no ships. Had they had people to build ships for them, those same people would also have helped them cultivate Goat-Island. Odysseus next sums up the qualities of the fertile island, ending with its good harbour. Odysseus can count on his addressees, the Phaeacians, to share his enthusiasm and surprise; after all, they are themselves sailors (6.270–2) and farmers (6.10).

The description is based on hindsight, since at the moment of arrival it is
a pitch-dark night (143–6). Not until the next day do the Greeks explore the island (153).

116–18 The beginning of the description is marked by a variant on the *'there is a place X’ motif. The narrative thread is taken up again in 142 with the usual anaphoric ἐνθα, ‘there’.

136–41 This *‘harbour’ description contains the typical elements of protection against the elements, and water and trees at its head.

142–50 A special instance of the *‘landing’ type-scene, the irregularities being caused by the darkness at the moment of landing and the special features of the harbour: (ii) entering the harbour (142–5); (v–vi) it is not necessary to lower the anchor-stones and tie the moorings in this harbour; (ix) instead of drawing the ship on land, it comes to shore itself (148b); (iii) only now are the sails furled (149); (vii) and the crew disembarks (150).

159–60 For Odysseus, as leader, getting a larger share, cf. 550–1.

163–5 This reminder of the Ciconian wine (cf. 45n.) serves as a seed †; in particular, the detail that ‘it was not yet finished’ creates the expectation that it will soon play a role, as it does in 196ff.

166–223 An instance of the ‘zooming-in’ technique; cf. 3.4–67n.: we gradually get closer to the Cyclops’ cave, following the pace of the Greeks’ focalization. First, standing on Goat-Island, they see smoke and hear sheep and goats bleating (166–7). Then, from the coast where they have landed, they see the outside of the cave and the yard in front of it (182–92. Odysseus-narrator inserts hindsight information about animals and herdsman; note in particular the iterative forms ἰαῦεσκεν, ‘they were wont to sleep’, and ποιμαινεσκεν, ‘he was wont to herd’). Finally, they arrive at the cave and admire its interior (216–23).

166–7 Smoke is typically the first sign of human habitation seen by a traveller; cf. 1.58–9; 10.98–9, 149–52, and 196–7 (and cf. the fire beacons in 10.30 and Il. 19.375–8).

174–6 On the level of the fabula † this is the first time that Odysseus, self-confident and full of energy, asks himself this question. Later (but earlier in the story †), it becomes the typical sigh of a weary wanderer; cf. 6.119–21n.

182–92 A combination of scenery † description (182–6) and explicit characterization † (187–92), the former preparing for the latter. The cave and yardwall are ‘high’ and the latter is made of ‘tall’ pines, as befits the ‘gigantic’ Cyclops (πελώριος: 187, 190, πέλαρος: 428), who resembles a ‘peak
of high mountains'; his cave lies 'at the extremity' (sc. of the Cyclopes' territory), and he lives 'alone', resembling a peak 'which appears alone from the others'. The narratees may contrast Calypso's cave, which is 'spacious' (5.57) but not high, and Eumaeus' yard, which is 'high', but also 'spacious and beautiful' (14.6–7). Moreover, Eumaeus' yard is made of pales, which he has split off from an oak, whereas the Cyclops has simply used felled trees (another manifestation of his technological backwardness (cf. 106–566n.). The gigantic size (and hence force: cf. 214) of the Cyclops will play an important role in the subsequent events: he will block the entrance to the cave with an enormous rock (240–3), and will (break off and) hurl parts of the mountain at the Greeks (481, 537). His solitary nature prepares for the pathos of the 'No One' trick (which leaves him alone with his agony) and the address to his ram (the one living being he is attached to).

For the 'zooming-in' technique, cf. 166–223n.

190–2 A double comparison: he did not resemble A but B. The negative part, he did not resemble a 'bread-eating' man, contains the first hint that Polyphemus will turn out to be a cannibal (cf. his qualification as ‘man-eating’ in 10.200). The positive part, he resembled a mountain peak, suggests size (cf. 3.290 and 11.243, of waves, and esp. 10.113, of the queen of the – cannibalistic – Laestrygonians), wildness, and isolation.

195–542 The confrontation with the Cyclops is one continuous perversion of the *visit’ type-scene: the Greeks (i) set out (195–215; expanded with the crucial detail of Odysseus taking with him special wine); (ii) arrive at their destination (216); (iii) and do not find the Cyclops at home (216–17; cf. 5.76–91n.). From this point on, the story diverges from the usual pattern. (iv) The Greeks enter uninvited, eat of their host’s cheese, and wait for him to arrive (218–33). (vi) Directly upon spotting the strangers – note the realistic detail of the Cyclops seeing them only after he has made a fire – he breaks with the rules of the *identification of the guest ritual by asking them their names, instead of speaking words of welcome and waiting until after a meal to ask his questions (251–5). Surprise rather than rudeness may be at play in this stage; after all, the solitary giant all of a sudden finds himself confronted with strangers inside his cave. His suggestion that they may be pirates is not entirely unfounded, since they did intend to steal sheep (cf. 226–7). The situation becomes more serious when he rejects the authority of Zeus "Xeino..."
(273–6). (v) The ultimate outrage is when instead of offering his guests a meal, he makes a meal of them (288–93, 344). (ix) In 267–8 Odysseus asks for a guest-gift. At first Polyphemus does not react, but later twice offers him lethal guest-gifts (to be eaten last: 369–70 and the boulders he throws at Odysseus’ ship: 517, 537). (x) The escort home, which Polyphemus promises to ask his father Poseidon for, in fact consists of a long and troublesome return (530–5). Note that Odysseus counters the Cyclops’ perversions of the hospitality ritual with his own wily inversions: as a guest, he offers his host wine which will prove fatal to him; and asked for his name, he gives a false one.

Odysseus’ meeting with Polyphemus also provides a special variant of the *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern: when the Cyclops asks the strangers who they are (252–5), Odysseus reveals that they are Greeks and veterans of the Trojan War, but does not mention his name (259–66). Odysseus-narrator nowhere motivates this reticence, but it is clear that once more he is acting out of foresight (as when he decides to take wine with him; cf. 196–215n.). When the Cyclops explicitly asks him for his name (355–6), he gives a made-up one: ‘No One’ (366–7). In 396–414 the effectiveness of this name becomes clear: it prevents the Cyclops from being helped by his fellow Cyclopes. At the moment of departure Odysseus finally gives his real name, lineage, and homeland (502–5), which triggers a sudden recognition on the part of Polyphemus, who had once been told about Odysseus in a prophecy (506–16).

196–215 One aspect of *Odysseus’ characteristic cleverness is his foresight (cf. 5.354–64, 408–23, 10.91–6nn.): he takes special wine with him, which he expects to need in his encounter with the strong man. The use of this ‘prop’ has been carefully prepared for in 45 and 163–5. Odysseus-narrator reinforces the effect of the foresight of Odysseus-actor by inserting at this point his hindsight knowledge of the savage nature of the Cyclops (214–15), which subtly suggests that even then Odysseus-actor already suspected the violent nature of the Cyclops.

The wine is described in the form of an epic regression †:

D I held a sack with wine (196),
C sweet (197a),
B which the Ciconian priest Maron had given me (197b–198),
A because I had spared him and his family (199–201a).
He gave me splendid gifts: seven talents of gold, a silver crater, and twelve amphorae with wine (201b–204),
a sweet, strong, and divine drink, which only Maron, his wife and one servant knew about (205–11).
It was a sack of that wine which I carried (212).

This external analepsis † adds to the effect of Odysseus’ victory: he punishes an unfriendly host with a gift from a friendly host; cf. 21.11–41n.

Homeric objects are usually described immediately prior to the moment they are used: e.g., Pandarus’ bow is described in II. 4.106–11, used in 112ff. Here Odysseus gives a description at an earlier stage: the wine will not be used until 346ff. This narrative strategy again adds to the effect of Odysseus’ foresight. The description of the wine emphasizes precisely those qualities which will play a role in future events: it is very strong, since it must be mixed with much more water than usual (209), ‘sweet’ (δέως: 197, 205, 210), ‘divine’ (205, 211), and irresistible (211). In the scene where Polyphemus drinks the wine we hear how he ‘enjoyed’ (σαττό) the ‘sweet drink’ (δύ ποτόν, a unique combination: 353–4), considers it divine (359), asks for more (354, 361), and is overpowered by it (362, 371–4). Had Odysseus described the wine at the moment it is put to use, its effectiveness would have seemed pure luck. For another early description, cf. 240–3.

The orderly arrangement of the animals resembles that of Eumaeus’ stalls (14.13–17). Throughout the episode Polyphemus’ care for his animals will be stressed (cf. 308–11n.), by way of preparation for his pathetic address to his pet ram (446–60).

Speaking with hindsight, Odysseus admits that he made a mistake in not listening to his companions (228: it would have been ‘more profitable’ if he had); cf. Hector in II. 22.99–103. Eurylochus will later condemn his leader’s behaviour in much stronger terms, calling it ἔτασσο λίζειν, ‘reckless foolishness’ (10.437).

What are Odysseus’ motives for insisting on meeting the Cyclops? In the first place, he is pursuing his earlier plan to test these people (cf. 106–566n.). In the second place, he is adhering to the heroic code, by asking his host for a guest-gift instead of secretly stealing some food and making off. This will be his first – painful – confrontation with the limits of the heroic code; cf.

15 Müller (1968: 41–8).
Introduction. Finally, he is driven by intellectual curiosity; he wants to see with his own eyes the mysterious inhabitant of the enormous cave. Curiosity is a characteristic of *Odysseus; cf. 11.229, 234 (he wants to talk with the heroines), 566–7, 630 (he wants to see the sinners); and 12.181–94 (he wants to listen to the Sirens).

230 Odysseus-narrator heightens the tension by announcing – by means of the typical *proleptic μέλλω – that the Cyclops’ appearance would ‘not be pleasant’.

233–57 In typically Homeric fashion, the outward appearance of the giant is not described, but only indirectly suggested by the (terrifying) effect he has on the Greeks:16 236 and 256–7; cf. the indirect evocations of Penelope’s beauty in 1.366 and 18.212–13, of Helen’s beauty in *Il. 3.154–60. His having only one eye is never mentioned explicitly, but it can be surmised from the singular in 383, 387, 394, 397, and cf. 1.69.

238–9 The apparently superfluous detail that the Cyclops usually leaves his male sheep outside the cave at night is a seed †: in 337–9 the Cyclops will for once deviate from this custom and take them inside, which will allow Odysseus and his men to escape, hanging under the bellies of these animals.

240–3 Again (cf. 196–215), Odysseus describes an object prior to the moment it becomes relevant to the story (304–5). The narrative strategy here prepares for the dramatic effect of his remembering the weight of the stone just in time.

For the ‘not X could do Y, but he did it easily’ motif, cf. *Il. 12.447–9 (and cf. the variants in *Il. 11.636–7; 16.141–2; and 24.455–6). Here the ‘he did it easily’ part follows in 313–14 (where a comparison gives extra relief to the ease with which the Cyclops handles the boulder: to this giant, it is no more than the lid of a quiver to an archer).

251–86 The first exchange between Odysseus and the Cyclops is interesting as much for what is said as for what is left unsaid or lied about:17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polyphemus</th>
<th>252–5</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Who are you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Where do you come from?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>What do you want?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odysseus</td>
<td>259–71</td>
<td>B’</td>
<td>We have been driven off course, while returning from Troy to Greece.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

257–93 Once the Greeks have actually seen and heard the giant, their hearts sink, and Odysseus takes refuge in a *‘supplication’: (i–ii) for obvious reasons he drops the accompanying ritual of approaching the supplicandus and clasping his knee; (iii) in his *‘supplication’ speech (259–71) he refers to the speech-act of supplicating (267, 269, 270), makes his request for guest-gifts (267–8), and provides a reason why the supplicandus should comply with his request, viz. respect for the gods (269–71); (v) in his verbal reaction, the Cyclops both rejects the argument (he does not respect the gods) and turns the Greeks’ request for a guest-gift into a request to save their lives, which he denies (273–80); (iv) in his physical reaction he puts his words into action, killing and eating two of the Greeks (287–93).

266–71 For the relevance of Odysseus’ emphatic reference to moral concepts such as *themis, *hiketeia and *aidos, and to Zeus *Xeinios, cf. 106–566n.

272 The speech-introduction which contains ‘in pitiless spirit’, occurs
only in the Polyphemus episode (cf. 287 and 368); in this way Odysseus-narrator emphasizes the Cyclops’ harsh reaction.

281–2 Odysseus-narrator explicitly draws attention to the deceitful nature of the Cyclops’ question regarding his ship, the fact that he immediately saw through it, and the wily nature of his own (false) answer.

287–98 Polyphemus’ eating of his first two victims is described in detail. Twice Odysseus makes effective use of a comparison: the two victims are compared to puppies (289), to stress their helplessness in the face of the might of the giant; the Cyclops, who eats his victims whole (complete with entrails and bones), is compared to a lion (292), thus stressing his beastly nature. The morally reprehensible aspect of the event appears from Odysseus-actor’s prayer to Zeus and is emphasized by Odysseus-narrator’s reference to it as ‘harsh deeds’; cf. 106–566n.

295–335 Odysseus builds up the tension by narrating in extenso the long procedure leading to a solution. At first there is complete ‘helplessness’ (ἐμχανή), an unusual situation for πολυχανώ Odysseus to find himself in (295). Then follows the first *‘indirect deliberation’ scene (299–306), which takes an unusual form: an action (killing the Cyclops) is considered, but then rejected (they would have died, because the stone before the entrance of the cave makes it impossible for them to leave). In a second *‘indirect deliberation’ scene, which takes the ‘whether’ form, Odysseus hits upon a plan (316–18), which is then gradually disclosed, as it is being executed: Odysseus, having spotted a large trunk inside the cave, chops off a section, which he then sharpens to a point and hardens; only then, when selecting helpers, does he announce that he is going to use it to blind the Cyclops (319–33).

297 The giant drinking milk is a seed †: although he knows what wine is (cf. 110–11 and 357–9), he (apparently) is not used to drinking it, which makes him a ready victim for Odysseus’ strategy. The curious qualification of the milk as ‘unmixed’ may be a little joke on the part of Odysseus-narrator at the expense of the primitive monster.

304–5 The significance of Odysseus’ earlier description of the giant stone (240–3), evoked by the repetition of δριμων (305: 241), now becomes clear: if twenty-two of the best carts could not move the stone, how can a handful of Greeks be expected to do so?

308–11 The giant repeats his behaviour of the previous evening (cf. 244–50 and 287–93), which is described in abbreviated form by Odysseus.
The technique of juxtaposition † (Polyphemus first conscientiously milking his sheep and then eating two human beings) points up the ambiguities of his character; cf. 106–566n. The same sequence will be repeated a third time in 341–4.

313–14 For the ease with which the Cyclops removes the stone, cf. 240–3n.

317 Odysseus views his blinding of the Cyclops in terms of the heroic code: he longs for revenge and glory (317 = II. 7.81b, 154b; and 16.725b); cf. 106–566n. We are prepared for his imprudent – but eminently heroic – behaviour in 474–505.

321–4 The comparison of the stake to a mast signals the difference between the civilized Greeks and the uncivilized Cyclops (who has no ships at all: 125–9); cf. the similes in 384–8 and 391–4 and in general for the ‘nature-culture’ contrast, cf. 106–566n.

331–5 The motif of drawing lots indicates that the task to be performed is dangerous; cf. 10.206–9 and II. 7.170–99, where we find the additional motif of chance falling on exactly those persons one had chosen oneself (a good omen).

336 The epithet ‘with thick wool’ (cf. again 469) is a seed †: this thick wool is soon to play an important role; cf. 415–66n.

337–9 In a departure from his normal routine (cf. 238–9), the giant drives not only the female sheep but also the male sheep inside the cave. Speaking with hindsight, Odysseus-narrator wonders whether this was Polyphemus’ idea or whether he owes this unexpected piece of luck – the male sheep will help him to escape – to a god; for a similar set of alternatives in a first-person narrative, cf. 7.263.

341–4 For this (repeated) scene, cf. 308–11n.

345–74 Odysseus now puts to use the wine he has brought with him. Demonstrating its special qualities, the sweet but strong wine knocks out the giant (and thus makes it easy to blind him); cf. 196–215n. Another effect of the wine is to make the Cyclops ‘buy’ the stranger’s name ‘No One’, which Odysseus shrewdly does not mention until after the wine ‘had got around his brains’ (362).

The second conversation between Odysseus and the Cyclops continues the first; cf. 251–86n. (i) Having first – unsuccessfully – appealed to Zeus Xeинios (cf. 269–71), Odysseus now points out to Polyphemus that his
behaviour is mad and totally unacceptable (350–2); cf. 106–566n. (ii) Returning to Odysseus’ request for a guest-gift (cf. 267–8), the Cyclops now promises one which will ‘please’ Odysseus, but which in fact consists in eating him last; cf. 195–542n. (iii) Having first refrained from giving his name altogether (cf. 263–4), Odysseus now provides a false one; cf. 195–542n.

345–6 The speech-introduction with *standing near* and the explicit mention of the cup with wine indicates that Odysseus is holding the cup close to the giant, so as to entice him into drinking the divinely smelling (cf. 210–11) wine; cf. τη in his ensuing speech (347), which suggests a gesture.

361 The ‘three times X . . . three times Y . . .’ motif, which is based on a typical number †, is an emphatic means of indicating a large quantity or a concerted (but usually unsuccessful) action; cf. 11.206–8; Il. 8.169–71; 11.462–3; 18.228–9; 23.817.18

364 Odysseus’ repetition of the Cyclops’ question adds weight to his – false – answer; cf. 4.347–50; 5.97–8; and 17.138.

372–3 Only here and in Il. 24.5 is sleep called πανδαιμόνω, ‘all-subduing’. The epithet is used significantly, in that it calls attention to the fact that the strong wine has managed to put even a giant like Polyphemus to sleep.

375–97 An ambivalent description of the Cyclops’ blinding: on the one hand, the narratees are meant to admire Odysseus’ courage (cf. 376–7 and 381) and skill in effectively piercing the eye; on the other hand, there is the horrifying realism of ‘the warm blood’, the ‘singeing of eyebrows and eyelids’, the ‘crackling of the eye-roots’, and the ‘sizzling of the eye’. The two similes (384–8, 391–4) strengthen this double effect. As technical similes, describing the activities of a carpenter and a smith, they contribute to the depiction of Odysseus’ skill, and to the general theme of the victory of culture over nature; cf. 106–566n. However, they also draw attention to the cruelty of Odysseus’ deed: whereas the craftsmen deal with lifeless material, his object is a human being.

396–414 The scene between Polyphemus and the other Cyclopes reveals Odysseus’ name ‘No-One’ to be an effective trick:19

---

Cyclopes  ‘Surely, no one (μὴ τίς) is stealing your cattle? Surely, no one (μὴ τίς) is trying to kill you, either by guile or by force?’

Polyphemus  ‘No One (Οὐτίς) is trying to kill me by guile, not by force.’

Cyclopes (understanding Polyphemus to mean: ‘no one (οὐ τίς) is trying to kill me by guile or force’) ‘If indeed no one (μὴ τίς) is doing you violence, then you are ill and had better pray to Poseidon.’

Throughout this dialogue the narratees may also hear μῆτις, ‘intelligence’ in the repeated μὴ τίς in 405, 406, and 410, a pun which is made explicit by Odysseus in 413–14: ‘I laughed, because my [invented] name and excellent metis had deceived them.’ The pun underlines that πολύμητις Odysseus’ encounter with the Cyclops is an instance of the *‘cunning versus force’ theme: cf. δόλω ἦ βήριν (406, 408) and, in later reminiscences of the episode, κρατερῆς βίβλιν versus βουλή τε νόω τε (12.209–12) and μένος ἁσχέτος versus μῆτις (20.19–20); and cf. Odysseus’ repeated stress on his own cleverness (281–2, 419).

Until the moment Odysseus reveals his true name, Polyphemus will continue to think of him as ‘No One’, as witness his monologue in 447–60, where he himself bitterly puns, too: οὐτίδανώ... οὐτίς, ‘worthless... No One’ (460; cf. the echo οὐτίδανώ in 515).

412 For the way in which Polyphemus takes up this suggestion to pray to Poseidon, cf. 526–36n.

415–66 This scene brings the blossoming of the seeds in 238–9 and 336: the Greeks escape by hanging under the male sheep, who have thick fleece (emphasized in 425: ‘with thick fleece’, 426: ‘having violet-dark wool’, 433: ‘woolly stomach’, and 434: ‘abundant wool’) and, because they are used to grazing outside, are eager to leave the cave (438). Again (cf. 281–2), Odysseus stresses the fact that he is outwitting the giant: he is not the fool Polyphemus takes him to be (419; Odysseus is here for once – highly effectively – reading Polyphemus’ mind), but Polyphemus himself is foolish (442).

420–35 Once again (cf. 295–335), Odysseus-narrator heightens the tension by making us share the long process by which he finds a solution. It starts with an *‘indirect deliberation’ scene, which – uniquely – combines a ‘how’-form (‘how it would be best’) and a ‘whether’-form (‘whether I would find a means to escape death’). Usually the solution follows immediately, but here Odysseus first indicates that he had to think hard for quite a
long time, again stressing that it was a matter of life and death. Only then does he announce that he hit upon a plan, which is revealed while it is being executed.

428 Odysseus does not forego an opportunity to malign his opponent once more, calling the Cyclops ‘lawless’; cf. 106–566n.

431–5 Odysseus the leader typically assigns himself the most difficult task (cf. his returning to Circe alone and his being the only one to hear the Sirens). In the case of his companions he ties together three rams and binds one man under the middle one (cf. 463); since he cannot bind himself, he has to cling to one ram with his hands. Obviously he chooses the biggest ram, i.e., a full-grown one with a great deal of wool. Soon (444–61) it will turn out that this ram is Polyphemus’ favourite, which heightens (i) the tension (Polyphemus pays special attention to it, which increases the likelihood that he will discover Odysseus) and (ii) the pathos (Polyphemus’ arch-enemy outwits him by means of his own pet ram). It is this ram which is later given to Odysseus by his companions (550–1) and then sacrifices to Zeus (551–3).

440 Referring to Polyphemus with the periphrastic denomination † ἠνάξ, ‘their master’, Odysseus-narrator sets the tone for the pathetic monologue to follow (cf. ἠνακτως in 452).

444–61 The Cyclops’ monologue is triggered by his observation that the ram, usually the leader of the troop, is now the last to leave the cave (448 and 452, cf. 444). The explanation which Polyphemus seizes on (the animal is mourning for his master’s eye: 452–3) contrasts pathetically with the real reason (the weight of Odysseus hanging under him: 445). The monologue underlines most poignantly the ambivalent nature of the giant: in the first half (447–52), he speaks tenderly (‘my pet’), poetically (‘tender bloom’, a unique combination), and rhetorically (the triple anaphora of πρωτός); in the second half (453–60), he shows his violent side again, describing how he would like to smash ‘No One’ against the floor, so that his brain would spatter all over the cave (as he did with some of his companions: 289–90).

His speech introduces two topics which will be worked out in later speeches: his disdain for ‘worthless No One’, who only managed to defeat him with the help of wine (cf. 513–16), and his threat that ‘No One’ is ‘not yet free of destruction’ (cf. 528–35).

460 For the pun οὐτιδανός…Οὐτίς, cf. 396–414n.

464–70 The Greeks even manage to pursue their initial plan, to take sheep with them; cf. 226–7.
466–9 For the emotional reunion of Odysseus and the men who had remained behind, cf. 10.397–9, 408–21, and 453–4.

468–9 For the gesture ‘nodding with the brows’, which replaces words, cf. 16.164n.

471–547 The final scene between Odysseus and Polyphemus is constructed by means of the device of the doublet †:

| 473–4 | indication of distance | 491–2 | indication of distance |
| 474–80 | speech by Odysseus | 502–5 | speech by Odysseus |
| 481–6 | Polyphemus throws a boulder, which falls before the ship and hence moves it backward | 537–41 | Polyphemus throws a boulder, which falls behind the ship and hence moves it forward |
| 487–90 | Odysseus saves the situation | 543–7 | the ship arrives safely at Goat-Island |

473–4 At first glance, the *‘as far . . . as a shouting voice carries’* motif seems to be employed in a literal sense, but cf. 491–2, where Odysseus, though twice as far away, still manages to make himself heard.

474–505 Once again (cf. 224–30), Odysseus acts – with fatal results – according to the heroic code: twice he boasts of his victory over the Cyclops (474–9 and 502–5). The vaunting here is also provoked by Polyphemus’ disparaging reference to him as ‘worthless No One’ (460), as witness Odysseus’ rejoinder at the opening of his first speech: ‘it was not of a weak man you ate the companions . . .’(475). He turns the blinding of Polyphemus from mere self-defence into a truly heroic revenge (cf. 317), worthy of the ‘city-sacker’ Odysseus (504). Not only the aggressive nature of his words, but the very act of speaking is dangerous (as the companions point out in 497–7), since it allows the blind Cyclops to locate the Greeks. Earlier, Odysseus had prudently kept silent, using gestures instead of words (427, 468–9, 490). His second speech is given additional weight, in that the companions first try to restrain him; cf. a similar attempt in 224–7. In keeping with the importance of the moment – Odysseus is about to incur *Poseidon’s wrath, which will prolong his nostos* for ten years – this time their words are quoted in direct speech.

474–9 For Odysseus’ appeal to moral justice, cf. 106–566n.
492–3 A unique abortive speech-introduction: before he can address the Cyclops (note the imperfect προσηύδων), Odysseus is cut off by his companions, though only temporarily (in 500ff. he does address the Cyclops, and we find an aorist: προσέφην).

502–46 The last verbal exchange between Odysseus and Polyphemus brings (i) the dénouement of the ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern (when Odysseus at last reveals his real name, parentage, and home-city; cf. 195–542n.); (ii) two last instances of Polyphemus’ perverted concept of hospitality (when he pretends to give him a guest-gift and an escort home, which later prove to consist of boulders thrown at Odyssey’s ship and the obstruction of his return home; cf. 195–542n.); and (iii) the implementation of earlier hints (when Polyphemus, praying to Poseidon: cf. 412, sees to it that Odysseus will not be safe from destruction for a long time: cf. 455).

The altercation displays an extended and dramatic use of the ‘catch-word’ technique †:

Odysseus When someone asks you about your blinding, say that
Odysseus, city-sacker, blinded you, the son of Laertes, living on Ithaca.

Polyphemus Ah, this is the fulfilment of an old prophecy. There was a
seer, who said that I would lose my sight through Odysseus. I
always expected him to be a big man, but now it turns out
that a worthless man has blinded me. But come over here,
Odysseus, in order that I may give you gifts and exhort
Poseidon to give you an escort home.
For of him I am the son, he declares he is my father, and he will
cure me.

Odysseus I wish I could kill you, so sure am I that not even Poseidon
will cure you.

Polyphemus Poseidon, if I am really your son, and you declare you are my
father, grant that Odysseus, city-sacker, son of Laertes, living on
Ithaca, never returns home or returns home late and in a bad way.
(knowing Odysseus’ name, he can now curse him)20

507–16 The *recalled prophecy* motif is turned into an insult: Polyphemus had always expected Odysseus to be large, handsome, and forceful, but he turns out to be small, worthless (note the repetition of οὐτιδὲν ὁμός after 460), and weak, and has only been able to subdue him with the help of wine. This is Polyphemus’ contemptuous version of the ‘cunning versus force’ theme; cf. 396–414n.

507–10 For the ‘there was a man called X . . .’ motif, cf. 3.293–6n.

523–5 Odysseus uses an idiomatic form of asseveration, which consists in depicting a thing as certain by opposing it to a strong – but obviously impossible – wish: ‘as surely as I wish I could kill you, so surely not even Poseidon will cure you’; cf. 15.156–9; 17.251–3; 21.402–3.; Il. 4.178–9, 312–14; 8.538–41; 13.825–8; 16.722; 18.463–7; and 22.346–8.21

526–36 An instance of the *prayer* type-scene: (i) speech-introduction, which contains a verb of praying and gesture (526–7); (ii) invocation (528); (iii) claim to favour, here in the form of a conditional clause which has the force of an asseveration, ‘as truly as . . .’ (529);22 (iv) request, here doubled (‘may Odysseus never come home’: 530–1, and second-best ‘may he come home late and in a bad way’: 532–5); and (v) speech-capping, which contains a verb of praying, and reaction of the deity (536). Polyphemus’ curse acquires a divine dimension by becoming *Poseidon’s wrath*; cf. Il. 1, where Achilles’ wrath becomes the will of Zeus.

Polyphemus’ destructive prayer not only results in a perversion of the pompe element of the ‘visit’ type-scene (cf. 195–542n.), but also forms an anti.*farewell* speech, since a ‘farewell’ speech commonly contains a wish for the guest’s safe return home.

532–3 For the idea that Odysseus is destined to return home, cf. 1.16–18n. Polyphemus’ words echo those of Zeus (5.41–2) and Hermes (5.114–15). Details reflect their individual focalization: ‘for so it is fated’ (5.42) indicates Zeus’ certainty; ‘but it is still his fate’ (5.114) underscores Hermes’ message to Calypso that Odysseus must leave; and ‘if it is his fate’ (here) suggests resignation (Polyphemus would have preferred a worse fate for Odysseus).

534–5 For announcements of the circumstances of Odysseus’ return, cf. 2.174–6n.

551–5 Odysseus sacrifices to Zeus to thank him for their safe escape. Odysseus-narrator adds: ‘Zeus did not accept the sacrifice, but was already

---

planning the destruction of my men and ships’, i.e., the execution of Polyphemus’ curse in 534–5. How can we explain Zeus’s reaction, which is at odds with Odysseus’ repeated claim that he upholds the rules laid down by Zeus Xeinios himself (cf. 106–566n.)? A first solution is to question Odysseus’ statement that Zeus rejected the sacrifice; after all, he is not an omniscient narrator, and this may be no more than his own inference, based on his later disasters.23 A second solution is to question Odysseus’ claim that he has acted in the name of Zeus. He may in fact have acted wrongly in blinding the giant.24 A third solution is to assume that there is a fundamental difference between the more primitive behaviour of the gods in the savage and exotic world depicted in the *Apologue* and the higher ethical standards they adhere to in the world of the main story.25 A fourth solution, which I favour, consists in taking Odysseus’ words at face value. In the Homeric epics there is often a discrepancy between the faith which mortal characters have in the justice of the gods and the actual behaviour of those gods.26 Thus it is not inconceivable that Zeus gives more weight to the personal slight suffered by his fellow-god Poseidon than to Odysseus’ moral claim. In fact, this is precisely the position which he takes in 1.63–79: ‘yes, Odysseus is in general a pious man, but Poseidon is deservedly angry at him because of what he did to his son’. Through his blinding of Polyphemus, Odysseus – partly – incurs his own fate (cf. 1.16–18n.): it is not a crime, but it does bring down on him the wrath of Poseidon, with all the negative consequences which this will entail.

23 Jones (1988a: ad loc.).
This book contains two short adventures (Aeolus and the Laestrygonians), followed by one long one (Circe); cf. Introduction to 9.

1–79 Fourth adventure: Aeolus. This episode illustrates that Odysseus has fallen out of grace with the gods (cf. 9.554–5): Aeolus, himself a man ‘dear to the gods’ (2), concludes, on account of the mishap with the bag of winds, that Odysseus is a man ‘hated by the gods’ (74, 75). Again, the misery of the Greeks is self-inflicted (cf. adventures 1 and 3), as Odysseus-narrator notes, speaking of their ‘folly’ (27) and ‘stupidity’ (79).

The adventure revolves around the *‘sleep’ motif: the companions open the bag of winds while Odysseus is asleep. Their foolish behaviour forms an anticipatory doublet † of their slaughter of Helius’ cattle during his sleep (Book 12), an act which will have much graver consequences. For Odysseus, who is worn out, sleep was at first ‘sweet’ (31: γλυκὺς ὑπνὸς, a standard combination), but afterwards he calls it ‘cruel’ (68–9: ὑπνὸς ἤ σχέτλιος, a unique combination; the enjambement highlights the qualification). A similar change of focalization of his sleep occurs in 12.327–96n.

This adventure confronts Odysseus with a new variant of hospitality (cf. Introduction to 9): his host first receives him properly (entertaining him, asking interested questions, and providing him with an escort to his next destination), but later rejects him when he returns a second time. In addition, his escort is of a special nature: as master of the winds, Aeolus eliminates adverse winds by putting them into a bag and sends a favourable wind, Zephyrus (20–6). However, the companions mistake the pompe for a guest-gift (36, 43–4) and open the bag; the adverse winds gain free play and propel them away from their homeland and back to Aeolus (47–55). The second time Odysseus leaves Aeolus, he has to do without an escort and the
Greeks are compelled to exert themselves in ‘grievous rowing’ (78–9; εἰρεσίας ἀλέγειν ἢς is a unique combination).

1–13 As is his practice, Odysseus introduces the new characters at the start of the episode, the present tenses and epic τε revealing their mythical status (cf. Introduction to 9). The section is marked off by progressive ring-composition † (ἐφικτόμενθ' ἐκόμεσθο): in the capping-phrase we have moved from the island (1) to the city and palace (13); cf. 6.3–15. Aeolus’ status as a person ‘dear to the gods’ is clear from the large number of children he has fathered and his life of feasting. Odysseus makes no mention yet of his function as warden of the winds, but the ‘brazen, unbreakable’ wall running around the whole island is probably there to contain the winds.

14–18 Odysseus’ first (positive) visit to Aeolus is described in a summary † (one month in five lines) rather than a ‘visit’ type-scene, and all speeches are summarized: ‘he treated me kindly’, ‘he asked me everything’, ‘I told him’, ‘I asked for an escort’, ‘he did not refuse’. The brevity is due to the fact that this scene forms an anticipatory doublet † of the much more dramatic second visit (59–76), and also serves to suggest the routine nature of Odysseus’ first visit.

15–16 Unlike the Cyclops (cf. 9.251–86n.), Aeolus is interested in Odysseus’ Trojan past. Here, for the first time, Odysseus recounts the story of his nostos, which in itself forms part of the second, updated, version of his nostos-story, the Apologue. The third and most recent version will follow in 23.310–41n.1

18 ‘He did not at all refuse, but arranged an escort’ is in the first place a – typically Homeric – polar expression, used to characterize Aeolus as the perfect host. At the same time, the negated expression ‘he did not refuse’ (which is no worn-out litotes: the verb is found four times with a negation and fourteen times without) contains the suggestion of a refusal and thereby prepares for his later refusal (72–5).

26–7 A somber prolepsis †, containing the typical *proleptic μέλλω. It is all the more effective for coming right after Aeolus’ good intentions (he bound the other winds ‘in order that none of them would blow beside, sc. the knot, not even a little’, and he sent a western wind, ‘in order that it would carry the ships and crew’).

28–30 For indications of the days travelled, cf. 9.82n. The purpose of this

---

1 Thalmann (1984: 162–3).
summary †, nine days described in one line, is to stress how well things are initially going for Odysseus and his men, and thus point up the contrast with the reversal to follow; cf. 5.269–81n.

29–30 For the ‘disaster within sight of the harbour’ motif, cf. 5.279–81n. The pathos is heightened by the repetition of ‘already’; the use of the character-language † *πατρίς, ‘fatherland’ (again in 33 and 49); and the *‘smoke’ motif, which indicates that they have come within sight of Ithaca.

32–3 These lines not only explain why Odysseus is ‘worn out’ (31) and thus excuse his falling asleep, they also add to the pathos of the reversal which is about to take place: all that time he had been exerting himself ‘in order to get home all the sooner’.

34–46 Odysseus twice reports the companions’ (mistaken) interpretation of the contents of Aeolus’ bag: first in indirect speech (35–6) and then in an *actual tis-speech (37–46; 43–4≈36, 45≈35). For this technique of indirect speech preparing for a speech, cf. 1.29–31n. As often in the Iliad, the tis-speech gives us the perspective of the anonymous mass, as opposed to that of the leaders. The companions consider the heroic custom of the exchange of guest-gifts between kings as unfair, since they themselves never get anything. Here they moreover – wrongly – suspect that the bag of winds contains such guest-gifts, and decide to open it. Odysseus-narrator qualifies the decision as a ‘bad’, *κακή, plan (46); it will lead to a ‘bad’ wind (54); cf. also 64 (‘what ‘bad’ god has landed you here?’) and 68 (‘my ‘bad’ companions have ruined me’). Odysseus’ knowledge of what was said while he was asleep is an – effective – breach of the rules of *first-person narrative. One might even suspect him of inventing the exact wording of the speech himself, which not only reveals his companions’ stupidity and greed, but also presents a flattering picture of himself as ‘a dear and honoured man’, who received many gifts in the past. This is what he hopes will happen in the case of his present hosts and narratees of his story (the Phaeacians), too.

47–55 As the winds drive the ship away from Ithaca (48–9) and back to Aeolia again (54–5), we find an *‘indirect deliberation’ scene, which takes the ‘whether’-form. As usual, the first alternative is the emotional one (to commit suicide; cf. 1.59n.), and the second the rational one (to endure his fate in silence), which is eventually adopted. We get an inside view of the workings of πολύτλος Odysseus’ endurance (cf. τλαχν, ἐτλην).
59–76 The second meeting with Aeolus is recounted in detail, with speeches being quoted directly. It evolves along the lines of the *‘visit’ type-scene:* Odysseus, accompanied by a herald and companion, (i) sets out (59–60); (iii) finds Aeolus, who is dining with his family (60–1, an echo of 8–9); (iv) instead of standing in the doorway, he humbly seats himself on the *threshold;* he is aware that this time he is not arriving as the glorious Trojan war hero. The Aeolians are astonished, because they had not expected to see him again, but instead of inviting him in, they send him away after hearing the reason for his return (62–76). For hosts reacting with amazement at the arrival of guests, cf. 16.12–14n.

64–6 The Aeolians typically ascribe Odysseus’ misfortune to a *δείπνον.*

67–70 The difference between the speech-introduction (‘grieving’) and speech-capping (‘plying them with soft words’) reflects the modulation of Odysseus’ speech: he begins by explaining the cause of his plight, but then switches to a wheedling tone, asking for help.

80–134 Fifth adventure: the Laestrygonians. This adventure brings the fulfilment of Aeolus’ imprecation (75): Odysseus suffers severe losses (eleven of his twelve ships).

This episode displays the typical structure (cf. 9.82–105n.): (i) landing, preceded by the introduction of the Laestrygonians (81–96; while landings in the *Apologue* are usually described in a few lines, this one is expanded to include a description of the harbour and mention of the mooring of the ships on different places. Both details will play a role in the ensuing events); (iii) exploration of the new territory, here looking down from a high vantage point (97–9); (iv) Odysseus sends out scouts (100–2); (v) dangerous confrontation (103–24); (vi) Odysseus cannot save the other eleven ships, only his own, because it is moored outside the harbour (125–30); (vii) departure (131–4).

Odysseus recounts this adventure according to his experiencing focalization (cf. Introduction to 9). His introduction of the Laestrygonians in 81–6 – which is based on hindsight knowledge and/or mythological knowledge (cf. Introduction to 9), since at the time he did not know who he was facing (cf. 101) – describes them as peaceful shepherds and contains no hint of their cannibalism. At first, everything points to a civilized people: there is a ‘smooth road’, which the Laestrygonians use for their carts (103–4), a city

2 Arend (1933: 49–50).
(108), a palace (111), a king (110), and a princess, who kindly leads them to the palace. Not until they see the gigantic queen, do the Greeks become frightened (113). Soon afterwards it turns out that these gigantic people (120) are cannibals (116 and 124–5).

80–1 For indications of the days travelled, cf. 9.82n.

87–96 This *‘harbour’ description contains the typical elements of jutting headlands and shelter against the elements, and a unique element, consisting of enclosing rocks (87–8). This last detail prepares for 121–3, where the Laestrygonians stand on these rocks and throw down enormous stones at the Greek ships.

91–6 Odysseus is the only one who does not moor his ship inside the harbour. Odysseus-narrator does not indicate whether this was an act of foresight, as when he took Maron’s wine with him in 9.197–215; this may be part of his strategy not to reveal the outcome of the episode in advance (cf. 80–134n.).

99 The *‘smoke’ motif serves as a signal to the Greeks that, despite the absence of agriculture (98), the country in which they have landed is inhabited.

103–17 Odysseus is able to recount the adventure of his scouts, because the two survivors can be expected to have told him what happened upon their return (117).

The meeting of the scouts and the daughter of the Laestrygonian king is an instance of the *‘stranger meets with local inhabitant’ story-pattern: the scouts meet a local girl, the daughter of the king; ask her who the king of the country is; she shows them the palace of her father.

113 For the comparison of the queen to a mountain, cf. 9.190–2n.

121–4 The slaughtering of his men and the destruction of their ships is described by Odysseus with much pathos: there is the character-language † *κακός, ‘terrible’ and *ἐτέρπ-, ‘gruesome’; and the *‘fish’ comparison ‘spearing them like fish’, which serves primarily to illustrate the difference in size between attackers and prey, but also underscores the horror of the cannibalism of the Laestrygonians, who eat men, just as normal people eat fish. Odysseus will again use a ‘fish’ simile in similar circumstances in 12.251–5 (Scylla devouring six of his companions).

125–7 The effect of the device of *simultaneity is to suggest that the Laestrygonians are distracted by their meal, which allows Odysseus to cut the moorings and escape.

131–2 For Odysseus drawing up the balance, cf. 9.60–1.
135–574 Sixth adventure: Circe. This consists of two parts: the first (135–468) contains the ‘Circe’ adventure proper, while the second (469–574 + 12.1–143) is concerned with Circe as a frame to the ‘Underworld’ adventure.

135–468 The ‘Circe’ adventure displays the typical adventure structure (cf. 9.82–105n.), its first stages resembling the ‘Cyclops’ adventure (cf. 9.106–566n.): (i) landing, including an explicit introduction of Circe (135–141); (ii) initial activities, which here consist of recovering from the exertions of the journey (142–3 ≈ 9.74–5); (iii) exploration of the new territory (here, looking down from a high rock), expanded by a divinely assisted hunt (144–86); (iv) sending out scouts, expanded by a council, in which the expedition is announced, and a drawing of lots to decide who will go (187–207); (v) dangerous confrontation (208–60); (vi) Odysseus saves his men (261–466); (vii) instead of departing, Odysseus remains for a year (467–8).

Though it exhibits the same structure as the earlier adventures, the atmosphere of this episode is decidedly different. Because of the traumatic experiences of the recent past, especially the meeting with the cannibalistic Laestrygonians and the Cyclops (recalled in 199–200), the Greeks are dispirited: when he chances upon an enormous stag, Odysseus ascribes this luck to the commiseration of the gods (157); he uses his successful hunt in a ‘pep talk’ (174–7); whereas in the ‘Cyclops’ episode Odysseus initially acted on his own initiative, the Greeks are now forced to look for other human beings because they have lost their way (189–97); the companions previously displayed unquestioning obedience when Odysseus sent out scouts, but now they react with despair (198–202); they weep when the scouts depart (208–9); when Odysseus returns safely to the men waiting at the ships, he is met with a profusion of tears (410–21).

The pattern of hospitality displayed by Circe is the reverse of Aeolus’: she is hostile in the beginning, but helpful in the end.

In this adventure Eurylochus for the first time plays a role. His characterization † is implicit. He has leadership qualities (205), and is not without intelligence (in 232 he emulates Odysseus’ celebrated distrust), but he is also cowardly (264–9, 429–34) and offensive (436–7). He will oppose Odysseus in a series of increasingly serious confrontations (261–73, 428–48; 12.278–303), and in the end make the fatal suggestion to slaughter Helius’

---

3 Beck (1965), Segal (1968), and Crane (1988: 31–85).
cattle (12.333–52). At first he stands alone in his opposition, but gradually he gets the other companions to side with him; then it is Odysseus who stands alone (but survives). Eurylochus has both a plot function (to bring about the fated destruction of Odysseus’ last ship and the loss of his last companions) and a thematic function (to serve as Odysseus’ foil).

136–9 In introducing Circe, Odysseus mentions only her parentage, not her witchcraft. The relevance of her relationship to Helius and Oceanus will become clear later; cf. 11.100–37n. For the similarities between Circe and Calypso, cf. 5.85–91n.

136 Speaking here and in 150, 210, 221, 276 of ‘Circe’, Odysseus–narrator is using hindsight knowledge; when he reports to his companions what he saw while standing on the rock (194–7), he does not mention any name, and the companions who go to her house the first time do not know who she is (cf. 226–8 and 254–5). Not until 282 will Hermes utter the name Circe.

142–3 For this summary †, cf. 9.74–81n.

149–52 An instance of the *'smoke' motif.

151–5 An *'indirect deliberation' scene, which takes an unusual form: instead of ‘I deliberated whether to do X or Y, and decided to do Y’, we find ‘I considered doing X, but decided to do Y’. Odysseus decides not to take a look immediately, but to have a meal first and then send out scouts. This is the first time that Odysseus misses an opportunity to meet Circe, the second will follow in 203–7, when chance ordains that Eurylochus’ party will go out rather than Odysseus’. All this prepares for the dénouement of this adventure, when – last and forewarned – Odysseus goes to Circe and defeats her. The mention of a meal (155) also leads up to the episode involving the stag.

156–82 The ‘stag’ episode4 is a much expanded version of the goat hunt in 9.154–60. Odysseus–narrator describes the episode with pride, stressing the enormous size of his quarry (158, 168, 171, 180) and endowing the narration of its death with a heroic patina (162 = II. 16.346; 163 = II. 16.469 = Od. 19.454, and cf. in general for ‘biting the dust’ II. 3.55; 4.482, 522, 536; 5.588, etc.). In effect, the stag was literally a godsend to Odysseus-hero, which he exploited to cheer up his despondent men, knowing that soon he would have to demand new exertions of them. They have ‘a splendid meal’, an unusual thing in the generally sober circumstances of their travels; the

---

formula ἑρικυδέα δεῖτα normally refers to a festive meal in civilized surroundings, e.g. 3.66; 13.26. The washing of hands before eating also suggests a return to civilized manners (cf., e.g., 1.136; 4.52; 7.172).

This episode, featuring a ‘monstrous’, πελόρο (168), stag, also prepares for the meeting with Circe, whose house is guarded by ‘monsters’, πέλωρα (219).

174–7 Odysseus holds a parainesis to cheer up his men (cf. 22.69–78n.): urgent address (‘friends’) – situation (‘our time to die has not yet come’) – call to action (‘let us eat’).

196–7 An instance of the *‘smoke’ motif.

203–9 For the motif of ‘drawing lots’ when about to undertake a dangerous task, cf. 9.331–5n.

208–43 The ‘Circe’ adventure contains two confrontations between the Greeks and Circe, both constructed according to the *‘visit’ type-scene: the first involves Eurylochus’ party (208–43), the second Odysseus (274–466). In presenting the first confrontation, Odysseus-narrator makes use of his hindsight knowledge (derived from Eurylochus, Hermes, and his own experiences), but also mentions details which are not found in those passages; we must assume that he heard these later from the other companions involved in this first expedition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eurylochus</th>
<th>Hermes</th>
<th>Odysseus-hero</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) setting off</td>
<td>208–9</td>
<td>251</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) situation found</td>
<td>210–19, 432–4</td>
<td>252–3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Eurylochus does not mention the wolves and lions in his report, but refers to them in a later speech; by that time, Odysseus has also seen them for himself, although he does not record the fact)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) reception</td>
<td>220–33</td>
<td>254–8</td>
<td>310–15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Polites’ suggestion to call Circe does not occur in Eurylochus’ report, who does, however, echo some of his words: 254 ≈ 226, 255 ≈ 228; Odysseus may have learned about his role later, from Polites himself)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) (enchanted) meal</td>
<td>234–43</td>
<td>282–3</td>
<td>316–20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Circe feeding the ‘pigs’ acorns is not mentioned by Eurylochus or Hermes, nor is it witnessed by Odysseus himself; he may have heard this detail from the victims themselves)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Arend (1933: 50–1).
208–9 For the setting off in tears, cf. 135–468n.

210–19 Whereas arriving characters normally find a person, here the Greeks find Circe’s house and wolves and lions which she has domesticated with the help of ‘evil drugs’ (213). As usual (cf. 1.106–12n.), this element of the ‘visit’ type-scene has a characterizing function: the animals signal Circe’s witchcraft. In fact, the information about the bewitching must derive from Odysseus-narrator, using his hindsight knowledge. The companions see ‘terrible monsters’, are frightened by them, but do not suspect witchcraft, or they would never have entered the witch’s house, where soon they themselves will be given ‘baleful drugs’ (236).

212–19 Rather than attacking them, the bewitched wolves and lions fawn over the newcomers. As the comparison with dogs makes clear, they form a special variant of the *'watchdog' motif; cf. also Eurylochus in 434. The epithets ‘mountainous’ (212) and ‘with strong claws’ (218: only here used of wolves), stress the inherent wildness of these animals, which Circe’s drugs now (uncannily: 219) suppress. Some scholars have maintained, influenced by Eurylochus’ words in 432–3, that the animals are bewitched human beings; however, there is no indication of this in the text. The bewitching involves the reverse of what will soon befall the Greeks: they change shape but retain their minds (239–40), while the animals retain their shape but lose their minds, i.e., their aggressive behaviour.

220–33 The *reception the Greeks receive from the enchantress differs from the usual procedure: the visitors (a) stand in the doorway, but instead of (b) being seen by their hostess — it is clear from 230 that the door is closed — they hear her singing. One of the companions suggests shouting to her (his words are quoted directly so as to emphasize this dramatic decision). She then (c) hurries outside and, without (e) speaking words of welcome, immediately (f) calls them in. The (g) offer of a seat is again conventional, but here only emphasizes the contrast with what is soon to follow, when the companions are locked up in pig sties.

225 The chunk of explicit characterization † of Polites, who plays only here a role, is functional: Odysseus-narrator stresses his attachment to this companion, thereby preparing for his later resolve to go to Circe and save his men (261–73).

234–43 The element of the meal points up Circe’s perversion of the hospitality ritual: the guests are first given a drugged potion and then, after they have been changed into pigs, are fed a pig’s meal.
The bewitching of the companions involves two devices, a drug (φάρμακον) and a magic wand (ῥάβδος). It is not always clear which device does what. The confusion may be due to the conflation of two motifs: giving food which makes men forgetful (cf. the Lotus-Eaters in 9.92–7), and changing the outward shape of men with the help of a magic wand (cf. Athena changing Odysseus into an old beggar in 13.429–33). In 235–6 the drugs bring forgetfulness (the *‘forgetting-remembering’ motif), whereas it seems to be the wand which brings about the metamorphosis into pigs; in 291 and 318 the bewitching is associated with the drugs (but in both cases the wand is also mentioned: 293, 319); in 391–7 the metamorphosis back into men and the return of their memory is ascribed to drugs, although Circe’s wand is mentioned in 389 and therefore presumably played a role as well.

240 The fact that the men’s minds remain intact seems to contradict their forgetfulness in 236. What is meant here, however, is that the men remain aware that they are men, hence their tears in 241; real pigs do not resent being pigs.

251–60 Eurylochus’ report displays the restrictions of a *first-person narrative: from the moment they arrive at Circe’s house, he describes only what he saw from his position outside the house, i.e., the other companions disappearing inside and no one coming out. He does not witness their transformation into pigs. This crucial information will be imparted to Odysseus by Hermes.

261–2 The detail of Odysseus putting on his sword before setting out, which does not appear in any other adventure, is a seed †: it prepares for the use he will make of this sword in the confrontation with Circe (294 and 321).

263–73 This is the first confrontation between *Eurylochus and Odysseus; cf. 135–468n. Its tone is moderate (Eurylochus begs Odysseus not to make him accompany him, a request which Odysseus immediately grants, in kind words) and its scope restricted (only Odysseus and Eurylochus are involved), but it contains hints of what is to come (Eurylochus challenges Odysseus’ leadership by proposing a different strategy: to flee instead of to save the men who have been changed into pigs). This time Eurylochus’ opposition is partly successful (he does not have to join Odysseus), and partly unsuccessful (Odysseus does not take up his suggestion to flee). It brings to the fore *Odysseus’ characteristic solicitude as leader, who sees it as his duty (‘strong necessity’) to save his men.
274–466 The underlying structure of Odysseus’ confrontation with Circe is that of the *visit* type-scene: (i) setting off (274); (ii) just prior to the moment of arrival a meeting with Hermes is inserted (275–309); (iv) reception (310–15); (v) enchanted meal (316–20); (vi) conversation, which begins uniquely (Odysseus attacking Circe) and ends uniquely (their love-making) (321–47); (vii) bath (358–67); and (v’) a second, festive meal (348–57 and 368–466), in the course of which Odysseus is reunited with his men. Much later follows (x) Circe’s special escort home (475–95n.).

The first stages closely resemble the confrontation between Eurylochus’ party and Circe; cf. 208–43n. The main difference is that Odysseus knows which dangers lie ahead of him. Thus in 276 the hapax πολυφαρμάκου, ‘of many drugs’, reflects his apprehension at the moment he is about to meet the sorceress; in 309 his heart ‘is a storm’ as he continues his journey to Circe; and in 313 he enters her house ‘deeply troubled’, whereas his companions entered ‘in all their innocence’ (231).

275–309 Odysseus’ meeting with Hermes is an instance of a *‘god meets mortal’* scene, which bears a close similarity to II. 24.339–469, the encounter between Hermes and Priam, who is on his way to Achilles: Hermes meets Odysseus and Priam in the guise of a young man (278b–279; cf. II. 24.347–8); he chides them for the danger involved in the journey (281–2; cf. II. 24.362–3); describes the specific dangers which await them (282–5; cf. II. 24.364–9); offers his help (287; cf. II. 24.370–1); gives instructions as to how to proceed in the upcoming confrontation (293–301; cf. II. 24.465–7); and then leaves them to return to Olympus (307–8a; cf. II. 24.468–9a). There are three major differences. (i) Hermes gives Odysseus a ‘magic herb’, moly (287–92); this element is lacking in the Iliad, but here it is necessary as an antidote to Circe’s witchcraft. (ii) Hermes is not sent by Zeus (as he is in II. 24.332–8), but acts on his own; his motive may be that he knows that Odysseus will one day meet Circe (cf. 330–2). (iii) Hermes does not reveal his divine identity to Odysseus, as he does to Priam (II. 24.460–7). How does Odysseus know he has been dealing with Hermes (277, 307)? There are three possible answers. (i) Odysseus’ knowledge is unmotivated, as in 34–46 and 12.327–96n. (ii) Odysseus’ use of the epithet χρυσόρρατης, ‘with golden wand’, in 277 may indicate that despite his disguise as a young man, Hermes carries his magic wand and that it is by this standard attribute (5.44–8n.) that Odysseus recognizes him. It should be noted that, in contrast to the scene in the Iliad, Hermes does not reinforce his mortal disguise
by telling a lying tale in which he creates for himself a false identity. (iii) The young man’s gift of *moly, a plant which only gods can dig up (305–6), may lead Odysseus to the conclusion that he must be a god; it is then only logical for him to think of Hermes, the protector of wayfarers.

275–6 The use of *interruptive μέλλω calls attention to the timing of the confrontation: Odysseus was about to reach Circe’s house (and, not being informed about her drugs, is sure to become her next victim; cf. Hermes’ words in 284–5), when he meets Hermes.

293–301 For Hermes’ instructions, cf. 316–97n.

305 The Homeric epics regularly refer to the ‘language of gods’, often in opposition to the ‘language of men’; cf. 12.61; *Il. 1.403; 2.813–14; 14.290–1; and 20.74.6 Here Odysseus also stresses that it is difficult for mortals to dig out the plant, whereas gods can do everything (a *gnomic utterance).

307–8 For the explicit marking of the deity’s return after a divine intervention, cf. 6.41–7n.

316–97 Events take place as foreseen by Hermes in 293–301; in comparison with the god’s instructions, Odysseus’ version is longer, mainly as a result of the insertion of speeches:

Circe offers Odysseus a drugged drink, 316–18 Cf. 290–2
but is not able to bewitch him.
At the moment Circe touches him with her wand, 319–22 Cf. 293–5
Odysseus draws his sword and makes as if to kill her.
Circe reacts in fear and asks Odysseus to share her bed. 323–35 Cf. 296
Odysseus asks her to first swear an oath not to harm him. 336–46 Cf. 299–301
Odysseus shares Circe’s bed. 347–73a Cf. 297
Odysseus asks Circe to free his men, which she does. 373b–397 Cf. 298

Scholars have found it odd that concern for his men should delay the eating together of Odysseus and Circe (373b–387), but not their lovemaking (336–47). Hermes’ formulation in 297–8 (‘do not refuse the bed of the goddess, in order that she will set free your companions and look after you’) makes it clear, however, that sleeping with the goddess is a condition for the freeing of his men.7 Note also that Odysseus mentions his men in 338 and therefore has not forgotten them.

---

321–2 For once in the Apologue, heroic behaviour does not harm Odysseus; cf. Introduction to 9.

325–35 Circe’s speech offers a variant of the *identification of the guest ritual: she asks the standard question ‘who are you and where do you come from’ (325), but almost in the same breath provides the answer herself (330).

330–2 An instance of the *‘recalled prophecy’ motif. Circe, in contrast to the Phaeacians (cf. 8.564–71), has been told the name of the man who will one day come to her, and, unlike Polyphemus (cf. 9.507–16), she also knows his reputation (*πολύτροπος). The detail that the prophecy was brought to Circe by Hermes, the messenger of the gods, is natural enough, but in retrospect it, perhaps, also explains this god’s spontaneous intervention in 275–309; he knew all the time that Odysseus one day would visit Circe and therefore was ready to help this hero.

348–59 Having arrived at the moment of his love-making with Circe, Odysseus-narrator turns to the domestic activities of four servants, returning to himself and Circe only after the love-making is over, when the nymph gives him a bath and offers him food (360ff.). Only the presence of ‘meanwhile’, τῶν (348), subtly hints that something else is taking place during the domestic activities, an effective instance of *simultaneity. In his report to the Phaeacians on his stay with Calypso (7.255–60), Odysseus completely suppressed the fact that he had a sexual relationship with the nymph. In the case of Circe, he could not completely ignore it after 296–7 and 335, but he plays it down as much as possible. Odysseus seems to be taking into account the presence of a woman (Arete) in his audience (cf. the prudery of the female gods in 8.324); he may also be trying to impress on his male addressees, who are to bring him home, his image of a loyal husband, who is constantly longing for home (cf. 9.27–36).

352–466 The reunion of Odysseus and the men who were changed into pigs revolves around the meal. It all starts with the *‘festive meal’ type-scene: (i) preparations, consisting of preparing of chairs and tables and mixing the wine (352–7); (ii) serving the bread, meat, and wine (368–72); (iii) a – unique – invitation to eat (373a) is not followed by eating (373b–376; the typical expression ‘they put forth their hands to the food that lay ready before them’ appears in negated form as part of Circe’s focalization: ‘she saw that I did not put forth my hands’). Circe asks Odysseus why he is not eating (377–81; the metaphor ‘eating one’s heart out’ acquires an additional force in this context). Odysseus answers that he cannot eat before he sees his
men freed (382–7). When she has done this, Odysseus returns to the men who stayed behind, and exhorting them to come to Circe’s house, uses the argument that they will ‘see their companions eating and drinking’ (426–7). When they come back, they do indeed find them ‘feasting in the halls’ (452). Circe then invites all the Greeks to forget their sorrows and feast (456–65).

358–67 An instance of the *‘bathing’ type-scene: heating of the bathing water (358–60. This optional element, cf. 8.433–69n., draws attention to the care which is bestowed on Odysseus); (i) stepping into the bathtub (361a, here we find the variant of Odysseus being ‘sat down’ in the bathtub); (ii) washing (361b–364a; again there are indications of loving care: the temperature of the water is ‘pleasing to the heart’ and the washing lasts until Circe has taken away the ‘heart-wasting weariness’, κάματον θυμοφθόρον is a unique combination, from Odysseus’ body); (iii) anointing (364b); (iv) clothing (365); and (vi) seating (366–7). It is not clear who is actually bathing Odysseus: the fourth servant (358) or Circe. I would be inclined to choose Circe, in view of 366: it is usually the host who seats his/her guest.8

373–87 We find the typical *‘action-perception-reaction’ pattern: Odysseus does not eat, but sits ‘thinking of something else, his mind foreseeing evil’ – Circe sees that Odysseus is not eating but is beset by strong sorrow – and asks him why he is sitting like a man who has no voice and does not eat, and whether he fears another trick? Odysseus now reveals that he cannot eat as long as his companions are still pigs. The pattern here helps to emphasize *Odysseus’ solicitude as leader: the narrator does not immediately reveal why Odysseus is brooding (inviting the narratees to come up with their own hypothesis) and then has Circe come up with the wrong explanation, before allowing Odysseus to reveal the real reason, concern for his men. This solicitude is further emphasized by the use of a *rhetorical question in 383–5 (‘who, being in his right mind, would eat and drink before he saw his men free?’).

377 The ‘Circe’ episode contains three speech-introductions with ‘standing near’; cf. 400 and 455. This position introduces intimate, secretive, or – occasionally feigned – affectionate words: 4.25, 370; 5.159, 6.56; 9.345; 15.9; 16.338; 17.349, 361, 552, 20.190; and 22.100.

388–97 Circe undoes the bewitching of the men (cf. 234–43n.) and

---

also beautifies them (a *'beautification’ scene). The fact that the companions recognize Odysseus (397) signals that their memory has returned (cf. 236).

401–48 Odysseus-narrator faithfully records the execution of Circe’s orders:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>orders</th>
<th>execution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>402 ‘go back to your ship’</td>
<td>406–22 I went back and said to my companions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>403 ‘drag your ship up on the land’</td>
<td>423 ‘let us drag up the ship on land’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>404 ‘store your possessions and gear in caves’</td>
<td>≈424 ‘let us store the possessions and gear in caves’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>405 and come back to me, bringing your companions’</td>
<td>425–7 ‘and follow me to Circe’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>428–48 They obeyed, except for Eurylochus, who did come with us in the end.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scene serves mainly as a vehicle for Eurylochus’ second act of insubordination; cf. 428–48n.

408–21 This is the longest and most pathetic of all reunions in the Apologue; cf. 9.466–9n. The expansion is effected though the insertion of a simile (410–15a), a comparison (415b–417), and a speech (418–21).

410–15 The primary function of this simile † is to illustrate how the weeping companions flock around Odysseus (ἀμφιθέουσι corresponding to ἔχυντο, μυκώμεναι το κατὰ δάκρυ χέντως and δακρύσωνες; note that during the simile time ticks on, in that in 409 the companions are weeping ‘pitifully’, because they fear they will never see Odysseus again, whereas in 415 they are crying for joy, because he has returned after all). In the second place, the *‘parents and children’ imagery suggests the dependence of the companions on their ‘parent’ Odysseus.

415–21 The comparison makes clear that the companions identify Odysseus with their nostos, just as the Trojans identify Hector with the salvation of Troy (and hence weep over his death as over the fall of their city: Il. 22.410–11). Odysseus-narrator is able to read the minds of his companions, because in the ensuing speech they give expression to their feelings: 419–20 ≈ 415–17.

428–48 The second confrontation between Odysseus and Eurylochus is more serious than the first (cf. 135–468n.): there only Eurylochus himself
was involved, while here he tries to turn the other companions against Odysseus. He not only suggests a different course of action (not to go back to Circe’s palace), but also criticizes in retrospect Odysseus’ leadership in the ‘Cyclops’ adventure. This time Odysseus does not react in a neutral fashion, but becomes very angry and even considers chopping off Eurylochus’ head. Again, however, Eurylochus’ attempt at mutiny is unsuccessful: the other companions choose the side of Odysseus and in the end Eurylochus has no choice but to join them. It is interesting to note that Odysseus-narrator becomes emotional when he recalls this moment, as witness his use of the ethical dative moi (429).

431–7 Eurylochus tries to drive a wedge between the companions and Odysseus by addressing them rather than Odysseus, to whom he refers in the third person: ὤ θρασύς . . . Ὀδυσσεύς, ‘foolhardy Odysseus’ (this is the only time Odysseus is given this epithet); and τούτου.

432–4 Strictly speaking, Eurylochus does not know that his companions have been turned into pigs (cf. 251–60n.); as the narratees do know about this metamorphosis, we are dealing here with transference †. For the enchanted lions and wolves which guard the house, cf. 212–19n.

435–7 In typically Homeric fashion, Eurylochus backs up his argument ‘don’t go back to Circe’ with a (dissuasive) paradigm, which here concerns the immediate past: the ‘Cyclops’ episode. In his view, Odysseus acted in ‘reckless folly’ on that occasion (437). This accusation is exaggerated: it is true that Odysseus would have done better not to insist on a confrontation with the Cyclops (he has admitted this: 9.228–30), but *ἀτασσάλη typically refers to a foolish deed about which a person was warned in advance, and Odysseus received no such warning in the case of Polyphemus.

438–46 An *indirect deliberation scene, which takes an unusual form: Odysseus considers doing X (an emotional impulse: to kill Eurylochus), but is restrained by his companions (who come up with a rational alternative: to leave Eurylochus); for Odysseus’ impulse to kill someone, cf. 18.90–4.

448 Odysseus-narrator reads the mind of another person (Eurylochus), without explaining how he is able to do so. Eurylochus’ embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘he feared’) explains why he decides to follow the others after all. It triggers character-language †: ἐνίπτη, ‘scolding’ (five times in direct speech; once in embedded focalization: II. 4.402).

449–51 An abbreviated *‘bathing’ type-scene: (ii) washing, (iii) anointing, and (iv) clothing. Again (cf. 360–7), Circe’s loving care is stressed:
ένδυνκέως, ‘kindly’ (the qualification is found only here in the context of bathing). The bathing takes place simultaneously (τόφρα) with Odysseus’ mission to his ship. The effect of the device of *simultaneity may be to stress Circe’s cooperation; cf. 4.435–6n.

456–66 Circe’s speech has a parallel form †:

A Stop weeping,
B I know myself how much you suffered (456–7).
A’ But eat until you have regained the strength which you had when you left Ithaca (457–9).
B’ Now you are dried out and dispirited, because you have suffered a great deal (463–5).

For eating as an antidote to grief, cf. 4.212–14; 7.215–25; Il. 24.601–20. Circe’s stress on the men’s suffering and the need to recover explains – and excuses – Odysseus’ prolonged stay with her (467). At the same time, a limit is built in (‘eat until . . .’: 460–3), which makes it clear that, unlike Calypso, Circe does not expect Odysseus to stay forever. We are prepared for her casual acceptance of his departure in 489.

467–8 A summary †: one year is narrated in two lines. Its effect is to illustrate the aptness of Circe’s words in 456–66: she had promised the Greeks a period of relaxation, during which they would be able to renew their strength; and indeed they have a year in which nothing special happens, when they just eat and drink.

469–574 The ‘Circe’ adventure in the strict sense has ended and we now enter its second part (469–574 + 12.1–143), where it serves as a frame to the ‘Underworld’ adventure.

The ‘Circe’ adventure and the ‘Underworld’ adventure are closely connected: (i) Circe’s instructions in 505–40 will be executed in 11.6–50; (ii) Tiresias’ prophecy concerning Odysseus’ further adventures (11.100–37) will be complemented by Circe in 12.39–141; and (iii) the figure of Elpenor plays a role in both adventures (Circe: 10.552–60 and 12.8–15; Underworld: 11.51–83).

The combined ‘Circe’ and ‘Underworld’ adventure displays many similarities to Menelaus’ Egyptian tale in 4.351–586.9

Menelaus

The hero wishes to continue his journey home,
but there is an obstacle (lack of wind). but there are many obstacles.
A goddess advises
orders
the hero to consult a seer.
The hero prepares for the meeting, by
lying in ambush. digging a trench and sacrificing.
The hero meets with the seer, who tells him that he has offended
the gods, Poseidon,
because he has failed to bring a sacrifice, because he has blinded his son,
and instructs him how to appease them: he has to make a sacrifice
now. later.
The hero hears about the fate of his comrades
from the seer from their ghosts
and about his own death.
The hero returns, does
what the seer had told him, what a companion had asked him,
and continues his journey.

The scene 469–574 consists mainly of speeches:

471–5 The companions exhort Odysseus to think of home.
482–6 Odysseus announces to Circe that he wants to depart.
487–95 Circe assents in one line, but then announces that he has to descend
into the Underworld.
500–2 Odysseus asks Circe for a guide.
503–40 Instead of a guide,
(note the ‘catch-word’ technique †: ἠγεμόνος picks up ἠγεμονεύσει in 501)
Circe gives Odysseus detailed instructions.
546–9 In a first speech Odysseus exhorts his men to go, but does not yet
mention the descent into the Underworld, speaking vaguely of
Circe having ‘instructed him’.
In a second speech Odysseus now breaks the bad news that they must first descend into the Underworld, repeating partly *verbatim* Circe’s own words to him in 490–2.

**471** A unique speech-introduction: the companions ‘call Odysseus outside’ (sc. Circe’s house), because they want to talk to him alone, without Circe (cf. 486).

**472–5** This time it is the companions who have to remind Odysseus of his fatherland, while normally it is the other way around; it is to this anomaly that the vocative δαιμόνι, ‘strange man’, seems to refer. For the ‘forgetting-remembering’ motif, cf. 1.57n.

**473–4** For the idea that Odysseus is destined to return home, cf. 1.16–18n. The force of the conditional clause here is asseverative: ‘if truly it is fated that . . .’ which amounts to ‘as truly as it is fated that . . .’; cf. 9.526–36n.

**475–95** Odysseus waits until sunset, when his companions are asleep, to talk to Circe in private. This also means that he alone hears the news about his compulsory visit to the Underworld, which he will then gradually impart to his men; cf. 469–574n. This is an anticipatory doublet † of 12.31–142, where again Circe and Odysseus have a private night-time conversation, which makes him better informed than his companions.

Odysseus’ parting from his lover Circe is casual on both sides: he reminds her of her promise to send him home and she lets him go in two lines; cf. 5.149–227n.

This scene introduces the topic of Odysseus’ *pompe* (cf. 484: πεμψέμενοι), only to drop it again until 12.37–41, when his hostess Circe gives him detailed instructions on how to get home; an instance of the interruption technique †.

**481** The narratees are seldom told explicitly and beforehand about the attitude of the addressee of a speech: cf. 17.216; *Il.* 8.4, 492; and 16.232. The effect here is to prepare for Circe’s ready acceptance of Odysseus’ request.

**483–6** In his appeal to Circe, Odysseus employs a considerable degree of rhetorical exaggeration: Circe’s invitation to stay until they have regained their strength (460–3) is now presented as a promise to send them home; the single, factual request made by the companions (472–4) now becomes a repeated and emotional appeal (‘they are wasting my heart away, lamenting
around me, whenever you are away’). Note also the subtle change of meaning between the companions’ ἡδη in 472 (‘finally’) and Odysseus’ ἡδη in 484 (‘already some time’).

492–5 Circe’s explicit characterization † of Tiresias is tailored to the context; it indicates that despite his death this seer still possesses his mantic qualities.

496–9 Odysseus reacts very emotionally at the prospect of having to descend into the Underworld, as will his men in 566–8. They behave as if they had heard their own death announced: Odysseus’ reaction is the same as that of Menelaus, when he hears about the death of his brother (4.538–41. ‘Rolling oneself about’ is a typical sign of mourning; cf. Il. 22.414 and 24.640); the companions ‘tear their hair out’ (a sign of mourning: cf. Il. 22.406; 24.711) and ‘lament’. In a sense they have heard their death announced since, as Circe will say in 12.22, they ‘die twice’. Odysseus’ desire to die (cf. 1.59n.) is paradoxical, because his depression is caused precisely by the prospect of having to ‘die’.

505–40 For the execution of Circe’s instructions, cf. 11.1–50n. They are presented in the form of infinitives pro imperativo: 507, 511, 512, 517, 518, 520, 521, 527, 528, 531. Such series of imperative infinitives are common in the context of instructions or advice; cf. 1.289–96; 4.399–424; 5.327–53; and 13.393–6nn.

541 This *sunrise formula is used both by Odysseus-narrator (here and in 12.142) and the primary narrator (15.56; 20.91).

542–5 This is the only *‘dressing’ type-scene in the Apologue: first Circe gives Odysseus clothes and then dresses herself. The ceremony underscores the importance of this day, on which Odysseus will undertake his great mission; cf. the explicit recording of dressing in 5.229–32 (of Odysseus and Calypso, who on that day undertake the building of the raft).

551 This sigh, deploring that he has been unable to lead his men away ‘unharmed’, characterizes *Odysseus as a solicitous leader.

551–60 For the significance of the Elpenor figure, cf. 11.51–83n. Odysseus’ report of his death is based on hindsight; Elpenor’s ghost recounts his own death to Odysseus in the Underworld. The fact that Elpenor was left unburied is left out here, to be told at a more effective moment (11.53–4); an instance of paralipsis †.

Odysseus inserts a piece of explicit characterization† on Elpenor, using the *‘there was a person X . . .’ motif.

For the companions’ reaction, cf. 496–9n. As in the case of the ‘Circe’ adventure (208–9), Odysseus and his men embark on an adventure in tears.

The effect of the device of *simultaneity may be to underline Circe’s cooperation and determination: while the Greeks sit down in despondency, she is busy preparing their mission; cf. 4.435–6n.

*‘Ease’ is the typical qualification of divine actions and lifestyle. As Odysseus explains in the form of a *rhetorical question, here it means that Circe moves about without being noticed by the Greeks; for the visibility/recognizability of the gods, cf. 13.312–13n. Circe’s invisibility has no particular function here, but the stress on her divine status may add to the pathetic contrast with the mortals who are about to undertake such a dangerous task; a similar effect is seen in 6.41–7n.
BOOK ELEVEN

This book contains only one adventure, the one described in the greatest detail: Odysseus’ descent into the Underworld.\(^1\) A mortal visiting the Underworld is an epic theme;\(^2\) cf. 11.623–6 and \textit{II.} 8.366–9 (Heracles). The \textit{Odyssey} contains a second ‘Underworld’ scene in 24.1–204, when the ghosts of the dead Suitors arrive in Hades. Yet another confrontation between the living and the dead is found in \textit{II.} 23.65–108, when Patroclus’ ghost visits Achilles in a dream. There is virtually no description of Hades here. But then Odysseus does not really enter Hades: the ghosts come up to where he is, at the entrance. From 568 onwards Odysseus does describe some of the illustrious inhabitants of Hades \textit{in situ}, but the suggestion is still that he is observing them from where he stands; cf. 563–4n.

The \textit{Nekuia} occupies a pivotal place, both in the \textit{Apologue} (cf. Introduction to 9) and in the \textit{Odyssey}: Odysseus is confronted with his past and his future, with Ithaca and Troy, with his family and his comrades in arms. Whereas the \textit{Telemachy} showed us his family’s longing for Odysseus, the \textit{Nekuia} reveals Odysseus’ longing for his family. Having shared both perspectives, the narratees are looking forward to seeing the two parties reunited in the second half of the \textit{Odyssey}. This episode also continues the theme of the comparison of Odysseus’ \textit{nostos} with those of the other Greek veterans of the Trojan War (cf. Introduction to 1), in the form of meetings with the ghosts of Achilles and Agamemnon. Thus the visit far surpasses the function which Circe sketched out for it: to consult Tiresias (10.538–40). In like manner, Menelaus’ meeting with Proteus in 4.351–586 brings far


\(^2\) Bowra (1952: 78–84).
more than the explanation for his delay; for the similarities between the two passages, cf. 10.469–574n.

The episode has a clear, largely parallel structure:

A    Journey to the entrance of Hades and sacrifice (1–50)
B    Meetings with Elpenor, Tiresias, and Anticlea (51–225)
C    Catalogue of (fourteen) heroines from the remote past (225–330)
D    Intermezzo (331–84)
B'   Meetings with Agamemnon, Achilles, and Ajax (385–567)
C'   Catalogue of (six) heroes from the remote past (568–635)
A'   Journey back (636–40)

Except for its beginning (A) and end (A'), this episode consists of a series of items. A sense of unity is created through the use of catalogues and ‘catalogue’ narratives (cf. 51–225, 225–330, 568–635nn.) and, in the case of B and B’, also through the recurrence of a set of topics (descent: why did Odysseus come to Hades; death: how did ghost X die; family: how do Odysseus’/ghost X’s relatives fare). In B there is also a kind of narrative thread, in that Odysseus intends to meet Tiresias, but is first accosted by Elpenor; then, he spots his mother Anticlea, but before talking with her has his conversation with Tiresias. The Catalogue of heroines follows smoothly after Odysseus' meeting with his mother, herself a heroine. The Intermezzo also fits in well, in that it opens with a reaction by Arete, herself a heroine, and ends with Alcinous asking Odysseus about his Trojan comrades (370–2), which leads up to the meetings with Agamemnon etc., and the Catalogue of heroes.

The dominant emotion throughout the entire adventure is, logically enough, sadness (both Odysseus and the ghosts weep when they see each other: \(55 = 87 = 395, 59, 81, 154 = 472, 208, 388, 391, 465–6\)); the only moment of brightness comes in 540, when Achilles is pleased to hear about the heroic valour of his son.

Odysseus visits the Underworld in the thirteenth year of the fabula †; cf. Appendix A. Thus the knowledge of Odysseus and his interlocutors cannot go beyond that year (except, of course, in the case of the seer Tiresias) and lags behind that of the narratees, who have been informed about years 14–20 in the Telemachy; cf. 181–7, 409–56, 463–4nn.

1–50    Journey to the entrance of Hades and sacrifice. This scene brings the fulfilment of Circe’s instructions in 10.506–37, with minor changes:
1–9 An instance of the *‘departure by ship’ type-scene: (ii) the Greeks make their way to the ship (1); (iii) the ship is drawn into the sea (2); (iv) and made ready for the voyage (3); (vi) provisions, here the sacrificial animals, are put on board (4a); (vii) the Greeks go on board (4b–5; for their tears, which are unique in this context, cf. 10.566–8n.); (x) Circe sends a favourable wind and the voyage begins (6–8 = 12.148–50); (xi) the sailing is prepared (9).

10–12 As usual, the *sea voyage itself is described briefly, for the most part in the form of a summary †.
14–19 The Cimmerians, ‘wrapped in fog (ἡέρπι) and clouds’ and living in eternal darkness, form the fitting ‘last stop’ on Odysseus’ journey to the dark and hazy (ἡερδεντα) Underworld (57, 155; 20.356; II. 21.56; 23.51). Their situation is the exact opposite of that in Elysium (4.565–8) and on Olympus (6.41–7): there we have eternal brightness, here eternal darkness.

Odysseus has not been informed about the Cimmerians by Circe nor is his information based on hindsight; once again (cf. Introduction to 9), we are presumably dealing with ‘mythological’ knowledge (cf. the use of the present tense). Odysseus’ focalization appears from the *‘description by negation’ technique, ‘terrible night’ (19), and *δειλοσι βρωτοσι, ‘wretched mortals’ (19).

49–50 An anticipatory doublet † of 88–9, where – much more dramatically – Odysseus will not allow his mother to approach the blood.

51–225 The meetings here and in 385–567 are presented in the form of a *‘catalogue’ narrative: we have a series of narrative entries, which are marked by refrain-composition † (‘X came to me’: 51, 84, 90, 387, 467 and cf. the variant in 152–3).

51–83 The figure of Elpenor is not just one of the links between the ‘Circe’ adventure and the ‘Underworld’ adventure (cf. 10.469–574n.). (i) The meeting with him adds to the characterization of *Odysseus as a solicitous leader: even though Elpenor is one of his least valuable companions (cf. 10.552–3), he treats him well. (ii) The fact that this hero asks to have his oar planted on the tomb of his grave mound, i.e., wants to be remembered primarily as a rower, illustrates the extension of the concept of *κλεος in the Odyssey.

The structure of the conversation is as follows:

Odysseus
How did you come to Hades so quickly?
(usually it is Odysseus who is asked how he came to Hades)

Elpenor
Bad luck and too much wine killed me, for I fell off the roof in Circe’s palace.
(Elpenor does not answer Odysseus’ question, but instead narrates the circumstances of his death, i.e., deals with the ‘death’ topic)
But I beg you to give me a proper burial.

Odysseus
I will do so.

Spieker (1965) and Rohdich (1985).
51 The position of πρῶτη, ‘as first’, at the beginning of the sentence is unusual: of a total of thirty-seven instances of adjectival πρῶτ- in the Odyssey, only five open a sentence: here, 2.39; 3.36; 8.216; and 22.212. This position marks the unexpected nature of the meeting with Elpenor: Odysseus is keeping all the ghosts at bay and waiting for Tiresias (48–50), but instead of the seer it is Elpenor who comes to him first. Being still unburied, Elpenor has not yet entered Hades but finds himself at the entrance; cf. II. 23.71.

52–4 Only now does Odysseus fill in the information he had previously (10.532–60) left out, viz. that Elpenor has not yet been buried. This order of presentation is effective, in that the information provided is immediately relevant: Elpenor will ask Odysseus not to leave him ‘unburied and unlamented’ (66–78; 72 $\approx$ 54).

61–5 Elpenor’s narrative is a mirror-story †: he recounts events which earlier (10.554–60) had been narrated by Odysseus. In part, he echoes Odysseus’ version (63–5 $\approx$ 10.558–60), but leaves out the reason why he suddenly wanted to leave the roof (the noise of his companions preparing to leave: 10.556), and ‘excuses’ his stupidity by ascribing it not only to his drunkenness (as Odysseus had done: 10.555) but also to bad luck (note the typical use of *δαρμων*).

66–8 The form of Elpenor’s appeal, ‘in the name of your wife, father, and Telemachus (i.e., persons dear to the addressee)’ is conventional (cf. II. 15.662–5; 22.338; 24.466–7), but here it functions as a seed †: in 174–9 Odysseus will ask his mother about his wife, father, and Telemachus.

68 An instance of the ‘left behind’ motif; at many places in the Odyssey speakers recall the situation which Odysseus left behind when he departed for Troy: his son had just been born (448–9; 4.112 $\approx$ 144; 16.120), his wife was a young bride (447), his mother still alive (86), his father on the threshold of old age (15.348), his dog Argus still vigorous (17.314), and his weapons in the megaron not yet blackened by the smoke of the hearth (16.288–90 $\approx$ 19.7–9).

84–225 The meeting with his mother Anticlea displays the ‘interruption’ technique †: the action is started (84–7: Odysseus sees his mother), interrupted (88–151: Odysseus postpones a conversation, because he has been told to talk to Tiresias first), and then, after his conversation with the seer, resumed and brought to completion (152–225). The use of this device here is functional, in that (i) seeing his mother ensures that Odysseus will prolong his visit to the Underworld, even after he has fulfilled his mission,
while (ii) Tiresias tells him how his mother will be able to talk with him (140–9). From the deictic τὴν ἀνδρὶ in 141 it appears that during his conversation with Tiresias his mother is standing nearby.

86 A pathetic version of the *‘left behind’ motif: Odysseus spots the ghost of his mother who had been still alive when he left for Troy; in 202–3 she will turn out to have died out of grief over her son.

90–151 The scene of the meeting with Tiresias has the following structure:

Tiresias Why did you come (92–6)?
(‘descent’ topic)
Tiresias It is your nostos you are looking for.
It will be difficult (100–34a).
But you will die at a great age and in happy circumstances (134b–137)
(a variant of the ‘death’ topic: Odysseus’ own death)
Odysseus Those things the gods themselves have decided (139).
(much-enduring Odysseus accepts his fate)
(transition) But tell me this (140):
I see the ghost of my mother. Tell me, how can she recognize me (141–4)?
Tiresias I will speak an easy word (146):
(‘catch-word’ technique †: ἔτερος picks up ἐπειδὴ in 144)
let her drink from the blood (147–9).

92–137 A special instance of the *‘two consecutive speeches by one speaker’ device: Tiresias speaks twice in succession, once before and once after having drunk from the blood. The second time he speaks with his faculties as seer restored, as is underscored in the speech-introduction, which contains ‘illustrious seer’ (99). He immediately gives proof of his mantic powers by answering his own question.

93–4 The phrasing of Tiresias’ question shows pity for Odysseus (*δύστημε, ‘unhappy man’), who, leaving behind the light of the sun, has come to this ‘unpleasant land’. The tone of his question characterizes the seer, who will soon reveal to Odysseus the hardships which fate still has in store for him. The opening speeches of Anticlea (155–62) and Achilles (473–6) likewise set the tone for the encounter to follow.
100–37 Tiresias’ prophecy is an instance of prior narration; cf. 12.37–141n. It touches on the following points: Poseidon’s wrath (100–3), Helius’ cattle (104–15a), the Suitors (115b–120), Odysseus’ voyage inland to sacrifice to Poseidon (121–34a), and Odysseus’ death (134b–137).

When we compare the seer’s actual words with Circe’s announcement in 10.538–40 (‘Tiresias will tell you your route, the stations (?) of your voyage, and your nostos’), we see that he recounts both less and more: the only station of Odysseus’ nostos which he mentions is Thrinacia (the gap, the stations between Aeaea and Thrinacia, will be filled in by Circe in 12.37–141), but he adds information about the rest of the hero’s life and death. Thus there is a division of labour between the seer, who deals with the hero’s fate on a large scale, while Circe (as granddaughter of Oceanus) gives exact nautical and geographical information, (as daughter of Helius) a detailed description of Helius’ cattle, and (as sorceress) shrewd advice, e.g., how to outwit the Sirens. Tiresias and Circe do not mention Calypso or the Phaeacians, alluding only briefly to them in ‘late’ (114 ≈ 9.534) and ‘on a strange ship’ (115); presumably this would have resulted in too much repetition (Calypso has already featured three times in the Odyssey: 1.48–59; Book 5; and 7.244–66; and the Phaeacian episode has just been recounted in full).

101–3 For Poseidon’s wrath, cf. 1.19–21n.

104–15 This is the second time that the adventure of Helius’ cattle is referred to in the Odyssey; cf. 1.6–9n. Tiresias mentions only this adventure of Odysseus, because it is the crucial one: here Odysseus will lose his last ship and companions; cf. 12.260–425n. Because of its importance, Circe will repeat Tiresias’ instructions (12.137–41). At the relevant moment, Odysseus will recall the warnings of both Tiresias and Circe (12.266–9 and 271).

This part of the prophecy is in hypothetical form: ‘you can come home, if you will restrain yourselves . . . If you will leave Helius’ cattle unharmed, you could come home. But if you will harm them, I prophesy death for the companions. And as regards yourself, even if you will escape, you will come home late and miserably’. This form, offering Odysseus and his men a choice, adds a moral dimension to their fate; when they perish, it is through their own fault.

113–17 For announcements of the circumstances of Odysseus’ return,

---

cf. 2.174–6n. Tiresias’ formulation closely resembles that of Polyphemus in 9.534–5. Only in these two passages, which both occur in the *Apologue* recounted to the Phaeacians, do we find the detail ‘on a ship belonging to others’; this is fitting, since it will be one of their ships. Whereas Polyphemus had merely spoken of ‘miseries at home’, Tiresias now specifies these miseries: the presence of Suitors in the palace. Gradually Odysseus will be further informed about the Suitors; cf. 13.376–81n.

117 Penelope is the only female in the Homeric epics to be called ἀντιθέτην, ‘godlike’ (here, and in 13.378 by Athena); it is an important ‘plug’, deriving from a seer and a goddess, in a context where this character’s virtuousness is at stake. Note the contrast with the *ὑπερφιάλος, ‘overbearing’* Suitors (116).

118–20 *Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors is announced as certain, but its exact form – an open fight or a trick – is left open. Apart from creating *suspense* (what form will the revenge eventually take?), this formulation calls attention to one of the major themes of the *Odyssey*: *‘cunning versus force’.*

121–37 The last part of Tiresias’ prophecy is an external prolepsis †, such as we find in the *Iliad*, too (e.g., in reference to the wall around the Greek camp in 12.9–35, or Achilles’ death in 22.358–60).7 Odysseus will repeat it to Penelope in 23.268–84.

121–34 It is customary to sacrifice to the gods, in particular Poseidon, after a successful sea-voyage (cf. Nestor in 3.178–9); here Odysseus must sacrifice to all the gods, but first he must undertake a special mission, sacrificing to Poseidon when he finds people who do not know the sea and mistake an oar for a winnow-fan.8 Although Tiresias does not say so explicitly, Odysseus’ ‘pilgrimage’ seems intended to propitiate Poseidon, whose wrath against him is emphatically recalled by the seer in 101–3.

134–7 The prophecy of Odysseus’ death is (i) a Homeric motif (cf. 4.561–9; *Il.* 16.851–4; 22.358–60); (ii) one of the recurrent topics in the *Nekuia* (cf. Introduction); (iii) one of the similarities between Menelaus’ adventures and Odysseus’ (cf. 10.469–574n.); and (iv) the natural ‘closure’ to Tiresias’ prophecy as a whole.

It is typical of the happy ending of the *Odyssey* that its main hero is granted a long life; cf. Introduction to 24. For the desire for a long life, cf.

1.217–18; 4.207–11; 19.367–8; 23.286. Indeed, even the man who in the Iliad chose a heroic but brief life, Achilles, in the Odyssey praises life; cf. 482–91n.

139 For Odysseus’ fate, cf. 1.16–18n.

152–224 The meeting with Anticlea9 consists of an initial exchange (in which they talk about the topics of death, family, and descent), (an attempt at) a gesture, and a second exchange (in which the condition of the ghosts is discussed; cf. the last part of the meeting with Tiresias, 140–9, which also deals with ‘scientific’ matters).

153 Anticlea recognizes Odysseus ‘immediately’; cf. Tiresias (91) and Achilles (471), who simply recognize him; and Agamemnon (390) and Heracles (615), who recognize him ‘quickly’.

155–203 The structure of the first exchange between Odysseus and his mother is a combination of parallel form † and reverse form †:

Anticlea A Why did you embark on this difficult trip (155–9)?

B Did you perhaps come on your way home from Troy and have you not been back to Ithaca or seen your wife at all (160–2)?

Odysseus A’ The need to consult Tiresias brought me here (164–5),

B’ for I have not been near Greece yet, but have been wandering around ever since leaving for Troy (166–9).

(‘catch-word’ technique †: οὐ . . . πῶ/οὐδὲ πῶ and ἀλλημοι pick up Anticlea’s οὐδὲ πῶ of 161 and ἀλώμενος of 160)

(transition) But tell me this:

C how did you die? (170–3)

D Tell me about my father, son, and property (174–6).

E Tell me about my wife (177–9).

Anticlea E’ Penelope (181–3)

D’ property, Telemachus, and Laertes (184–96)

(‘catch-word’ technique: τίς ἔχει . . . γέρας picks up Odysseus’ γέρας . . . τις . . . ἔχει in 175–6)

C’ Anticlea’s death (197–203)

The order of Odysseus’ questions C, D, E is natural: having last seen his mother alive (cf. 86), he is eager to hear how she died; from his mother he passes over to his father, and in one move to the other male member of the family, his son; finally, he turns from the son to the mother of the son (note ‘with her son’: 178), his wife. The reverse order of Anticlea’s answer E’, D’, C’ is effective, in that it ends with her own death as a highly emotional climax: Penelope and Laertes grieve over Odysseus, ‘longing for’ (*πονεών) his return, but she actually died of grief.

155–62 Anticlea’s opening words are typically those of a mother, who is concerned about the practical difficulties of descending into Hades and who immediately thinks of her son’s home and wife; cf. Hecuba’s greeting of Hector in II. 6.254–62. Her final words will again refer to Penelope (223–4).

177–9 Scholars have been troubled by the fact that here Odysseus asks about Penelope, even though in 117 Tiresias had already told him that upon his return he would find suitors in the palace. However, (i) the question forms part of a series of questions, which display an identical structure (‘tell me about my father and son, is my kingly privilege still in their hands, or has another already taken it?’ and ‘tell me about my wife, is she loyal, or has she already married another?’; the same structure in 494–7); (ii) such family questions are a recurrent topic in the meetings of the *Nekuia* (Introduction); (iii) in 162 Anticlea herself broached the subject of Penelope; (iv) the information which Anticlea will provide differs from that of Tiresias (cf. next note).

181–7 Anticlea reports on Penelope and Telemachus as they were at the time she died (i.e., somewhere between the tenth or thirteenth year of Odysseus’ absence; cf. Appendix A): Penelope is in the palace, weeping for her absent husband; Telemachus is quietly enjoying his privileges as prince (even though he is only about ten or thirteen, he participates in dinners; cf. Astyanax in II. 22.491–501). Her comforting report follows Tiresias’ ominous prophecy (115–17) and gives Odysseus some assurance, which will have to last him the next seven years. The narratees know that by now (i.e., the moment when Odysseus is telling his story to the Phaeacians) the situation has changed dramatically (Tiresias’ prophecy that Penelope would be besieged by Suitors having become reality, and Telemachus being away on a dangerous trip); these are events about which Odysseus will be informed by Athena in 13.376–81 and 412–15.
This is the second time we hear about *Laertes’ plight. In part, Anticlea provides the same information (that Laertes has retired to the country and is working in his orchard), but also mentions other — pathetic — details: he is dressed in foul clothing and sleeps on the ground, in the winter inside, in the summer outside. It now appears that Laertes’ reclusiveness dates back to the time when Anticlea was still alive.

An instance of the device of the *‘erroneous questions’: Odysseus’ suggestions as to the cause of Anticlea’s death (172–3) are repeated in a negative and expanded form by Anticlea, before she reveals, all the more emphatically and dramatically, the real cause. Note the dramatic triple anaphora σῶ, σά, σή in 202–3.

This scene provides an example of Odysseus’ ‘gentleness’, which Anticlea spoke of at the end of her speech (203). Like Achilles in *Il. 23.97–109, he tries in vain to embrace the dead ghost he sees in front of him. The pathos of the gesture is increased by the ‘three times X, three times Y’ motif; cf. 9.361n.

The *Catalogue of heroines consists of an introduction (225–34), a series of nine entries (235–327), and a breaking-off formula (328–30); it is marked off by ring-composition † (227≈329). The entries are connected through refrain-composition †: ‘first I saw X’ (235), ‘after her I saw X’ (260, 266, 305), ‘and X (and Y) I saw’ (271, 281, 298, 321, 326). Most entries describe one heroine, one (266–70) describes two, and two (321–5, 326–7) describe three; at the end Odysseus starts ‘rushing’, preparing for his break-off. It is clear from 233–4 that Odysseus converses with each heroine, and in the initial entries we find verbs of speaking (236, 237, 261); soon, however, these disappear and the information about the heroine in question is given in independent form.

The heroines are defined as ‘the wives and daughters of noble men/heroes’ (227, 329) and hence the entries are *genealogies, which contain one or more of the following elements: (a) name of the father of the heroine, (b) name of her husband, (c) name of her divine lover, (d) name(s) of her child(ren). All these elements can be expanded into a narrative (A, B, C, D). Thus we have

The Catalogue follows naturally upon Odysseus’ meeting with his mother, herself a heroine (daughter of Autolycus, wife of Laertes, and mother of Odysseus), but like its counterpart, the Catalogue of heroes (568ff.), it has no direct relevance to the plot of the *Odyssey*. Both passages do, however, illustrate *Odysseus’* intellectual curiosity: he wants to ask the heroines questions (229, 234) and to see the ghosts of the heroes (566–7, 630). Neither is it inconceivable that Odysseus has inserted the Catalogue of heroines to please his female listener and hostess Arete, who indeed will be the first to break the silence after Odysseus has stopped narrating and will voice a favourable reaction. Thus it is remarkable that he omits or plays down all negative traits of the heroines: Leda’s notorious daughters Helen and Clytemnestra, Phaedra’s false denunciation of her stepson, and Procris’ seduction by her husband are not mentioned at all, the notion that Ariadne’s death was a punishment is hinted at (in ‘on the testimony of Dionysus’), and although Eriphyle is openly charged with a crime (she betrayed her husband for money), her story is dealt with in a mere handful of lines.

229–34 An *‘indirect deliberation’* scene, which takes the ‘how’ form.

235–59 This is the longest entry in the Catalogue, which even includes a direct speech. The story of the affair between Poseidon and Tyro displays elements of a *‘god meets mortal’* scene (Poseidon assumes a disguise, which he sheds at the end of the confrontation), and recalls the ‘Zeus and Hera’ scene in *Il.* 14.153–351 (cf. the concealing of the lovers, here by means of a wave, because the lover is Poseidon, in *Il.* 14.350–1 through a cloud, because the lover is Zeus).

287–97 The story of the seer Melampus’ ‘conquest’ of Pero is told on two
occasions, here and in 15.226–39. Both versions are presented in a highly allusive and elliptical style, together yielding the following story:

**Book 11**

Neleus demanded Iphiclēus’ cattle as a bride-price for his daughter Pero (287–91a). Only the seer [= Melampus] promised to get the cattle (291b–292a),

a promise which he later came to regard as an act of folly (233–4).

He was imprisoned by Iphiclēus’ herdsmen (292b–293).

After a year (294–5) Iphiclēus released him (296), impressed by his prophecy (297).

**Book 15**

Melampus lived in Pylos as a rich man (226–7).

in the palace of Phylacūs [= father of Iphiclēus] (231b–232), while at home Neleus confiscated his goods (230–1a).

Melampus returned to Pylos with the cattle, took his revenge on Neleus, gave Pero in marriage to his brother (235–8), and fled to Argos (228–9, 238–9).


323–5 For the ‘he invested but never enjoyed’ motif, cf. 16.119–20n.

326–7 The same story is alluded to by the narrator in 15.244–7.

328–30 Odysseus breaks off his narrative with the *recusatio* motif, which usually opens a narrative. For endings of embedded narratives, cf. 7.297n

330–84 The Intermezzo: Odysseus interrupts his tale and is bidden by his hosts to continue. Why does Odysseus stop abruptly in the middle of the ‘Underworld’ adventure and the Apologue as a whole? I will start with Odysseus’ actorial motivations †. In the first place, he subtly reminds his hosts of his escort home (332), which was due that evening; cf. 8.26–45n. It is

---

Odysseus himself, however, who opens the way to the postponement of his *pompe* until the next day, politely leaving it up to his hosts whether he will sleep on the ship (and depart) or in the palace (and stay one more night). The suggestion that he might stay is then eagerly taken up by his hosts (Arete in 339–40; Alcinous in 350–3, who also reiterates his promise that the Phaeacians will bring him home) and accepted by Odysseus (355–61). In the second place, ‘the singer’ Odysseus here imitates the behaviour of Demodocus, who repeatedly stops singing and is then asked to continue (8.87–91). To spur the singer on, he is offered compliments and food (cf. 8.474–98); Odysseus here likewise elicits compliments (336–8, 363–9) and gifts (339–40, 351–2) from his hosts before he continues his tale. His sudden enthusiasm to stay even a year if that would lead to more gifts (356–61) strongly suggests that his interruption was in fact a calculated move. Another resemblance to the scene in Book 8 is the fact that one of the listeners suggests the theme of the next song; just as Odysseus asks Demodocus to sing about the Wooden Horse (8.492–8), here Alcinous asks Odysseus to tell them about the other Greeks who fought at Troy (a subject they know about from Demodocus’ songs; cf. 8.73–82 and 499–520). But there is also a narrative motivation for the break: it lends extra emphasis to the meetings with the Trojan War veterans, with which Odysseus continues his tale.

The conversation has no formalized structure, but develops as speakers pick up each other’s words:

**Odysseus**

*I cannot tell you about all the heroines, for before then divine night would have come to an end. It is time to go to bed, but my escort home will be the concern of the gods and you.*

**Arete**

*(Compliment)* How does this man look to you, as regards his appearance and mind? He is my guest, but everyone joins in honouring him. Let us therefore not hurry his *escort home* and let us not be stingy with *gifts*.

**Echeneus**

The queen has made a good suggestion. Listen to her. But it is up to Alcinous to decide.

**Alcinous**

That suggestion [sc. of Arete] will be carried out, as long as I am king of the Phaeacians. But let the stranger *stay* until tomorrow, until I have accomplished all the *gift*-giving. But his *escort home* is the *concern* of all men, and of *me* in particular.
Odysseus If you exhorted me to stay here even for a year, and urged my escort home and gave me gifts, I would be ready to do that, for it is more profitable to return with many gifts to Ithaca.

Alcinous (Compliment) Odysseus, we do not consider you a cheat, but you know how to tell a story well, and have a sound mind, indeed you have recounted your tale like a singer. But tell me: did you meet any of your comrades who died before Troy? The night is still long and it is not yet time to go to bed. I would be prepared to listen to your sorrows even until dawn.

Odysseus There is a time for storytelling and for sleeping, but if you really want to hear more I will continue and tell you the sorrows of my comrades who survived the war, but died upon their return by the will of a wicked woman.

333–4 The same reaction as after Odysseus finishes his tale in 13.1–2. For the ‘enchanting’ effect of storytelling, cf. 8.83–92n. In the particular case of Odysseus’ storytelling we must not forget that his is a story never told before and therefore, in keeping with the principle set out in 1.351–2, one which is most applauded.12

336–41 Arete’s reaction – at last – explicitly marks her acceptance of the guest Odysseus; cf. 7.139–347. This is the second time that Odysseus is offered presents by the Phaeacians; cf. 8.389–93n. Arete’s proposal is authorized by Alcinous in 351–2 and will be carried out in 13.7–22.

342–6 Echeneus’ role here is similar to that in 7.155–66.

356–61 Odysseus uses the * ‘(not) even + hyperbole’ motif (‘if you were to invite me to stay here even for a year, I would be ready to do so’) to give expression to his enthusiasm about the gifts, which will help him to restore his social status on Ithaca.

363–9 Alcinous’ * reaction to Odysseus’ story takes the form of a compliment.13 He calls the storytelling ‘not deceitful, beautiful, and skilful’. The compliment seems triggered by the offer and acceptance of gifts in exchange for storytelling which have just taken place. In the Homeric world it is not unusual to tell attractive lies in order to gain presents (cf.


14.122–32) and the consummate host Alcinous hastens to deny any such possibility in the case of Odysseus. At the same time, paying compliments is a well-known means of inducing a storyteller to go on narrating (cf. 330–84n.).

Although strictly speaking he is not in a position to judge, the Phaeacian king’s trust in the truth of Odysseus’ tale is not unfounded: nowhere does the narrator call Odysseus’ Apologue a lying tale and in several places he authenticates parts of his story; cf. Introduction to 9. Of course, Odysseus is quite capable of telling lies and being επικλόπος, ‘wily’; cf. 13.287–310 (esp. 291: επικλόπος and 295 μύθων κλοπτιόν).

The comparison of Odysseus to a singer is a recurrent motif in the Odyssey; cf. 17.518–21 and 21.406–9. It is a compliment to the hero’s gift as a captivating storyteller (not as a singer, because he does not sing; cf. 9.37–8n.). At the same time, it is a compliment which the Odyssean narrator pays himself, turning his main hero into an image of himself; an instance of self-advertisement (cf. 1.1–10n.).

Alcinous uses the *(not) even + hyperbole* motif (‘I could stay up even till dawn, if you would go on telling me about your sorrows’) to give expression to his eagerness to continue listening. For the idea that there is a time for talk and a time for sleep, cf. 330–1, 379; 15.392–4; 19.591–3; for the idea that storytelling may replace sleeping, cf. 19.589–90; and 23.300–43.

Odysseus’ announcement has the typical structure of a proem (cf. 1.1–10n.): subject in accusative, followed by relative clauses, giving a very general indication of the contents of the story to follow. Despite the plural ‘my comrades’, Odysseus anticipates the story of Agamemnon, with which he will begin, as is indicated by ‘upon their homecoming’ (neither Achilles nor Ajax die ‘upon their homecoming’), ‘by the will of a wicked woman’, which alludes to Clytemnestra (cf. 410), and ‘even more pitiful sorrows’, which suits Agamemnon’s death (called by himself ‘a most pitiful death’: 412).

The meeting with Agamemnon revolves mainly around the ‘death’ topic, which is greatly expanded because of the importance of Agamemnon’s fate as a foil to Odysseus’. The conversation takes the ‘domino’ form †:

---

15 Besslich (1966: 30–3).
Odysseus A Who killed you (397–403)?
Agamemnon A’ Aegisthus and Clytemnestra did (405–26).
B Clytemnestra has shed disgrace over the entire female race (427–34).
Odysseus B’ Zeus must hate the offspring of Atreus, since Helen caused the death of many of us and Clytemnestra plotted treason against you (436–9).
Agamemnon C Therefore do not confide in your wife, but keep your return a secret (441–56).
D But tell me about my son Orestes (457–61).
(the ‘family’ topic)
Odysseus D’ I cannot tell you whether he is alive or dead (463–4).

385–8 Odysseus smoothly continues from where he left off in 326–9, ‘having’ Persephone scatter the ghosts of the other women (the wives and daughters of heroes in 329), and then ‘having’ Agamemnon enter the scene, one of the Trojan war veterans Alcinous had inquired about (cf. 371–2) and whose fate he alluded at in his ‘proem’ of 382–4.

388–9 When he says that Agamemnon was accompanied by ‘the ghosts who died together with him in Aegisthus’ house’, Odysseus is using hindsight knowledge, since at the start of his encounter with Agamemnon he did not know what had befallen him (cf. 397–403). The information prepares us for Agamemnon’s version of the ‘Oresteia’ story, in which the massacre of his followers will be described in more detail than anywhere else.

392–4 The same pathetic gesture as in 204–8 (Anticlea); the relationship between Odysseus and Agamemnon is hearty (cf. 3.163–4, where Odysseus returned to join Agamemnon).

406–11 The device of the *‘erroneous questions’: Odysseus’ suggestions as to the cause of Agamemnon’s death (399–403) are repeated by Agamemnon in negated form, before he reveals, all the more dramatically, the real cause.

409–56 Once again, the *‘Oresteia’ story is recounted. The climactic moment of the murder of Agamemnon has been alluded to briefly on several occasions, and once described in detail in 4.512–37 (from the standpoint of Aegisthus, whose machinations we follow from the moment his spy spots Agamemnon). Now the victim Agamemnon is allowed to describe his death and that of his companions (for the first time in detail; contrast the one line in 4.536), as well as Cassandra’s (a new detail). This results in an emotional and pathetic tone: ‘my wicked wife’ (410; cf. 4.92),
Aegisthus killed me ‘as one cuts down an ox at his manger’ (411; cf. 4.535), my companions were killed ‘like pigs, in the house of a rich man, for a wedding, a communal meal, or a banquet’ (413–15), ‘a most pitiful death’ (412), ‘you have seen the slaughter of many men, but seeing these things you would be most sorry at heart’ (416–18, a summary priamel †), ‘most pitiful was the voice’ (421), ‘treacherous Clytemnestra’ (422, κυνώτης, ‘bitch-like’, i.e., ‘very shameless’ (424), ‘most terrible and doggish’ (427), ‘a shameful deed’ (429), ‘I thought my arrival would be joyful to my family’ (431), ‘with thoughts surpassingly grisly’ (432).

Agamemnon presents Clytemnestra,16 who had maintained a ‘low profile’ in the previous versions of the ‘Oresteia’ story, as its main culprit: Aegisthus is mentioned once at the very beginning (409), but after that it is Clytemnestra who is the sole agent (422, 424, 429–30). This shift is due to the fact that the story is now told to Odysseus and that its ‘argument’ function † is to warn him. The way in which this happens is quite complex. Agamemnon concludes the tale of his own murder with generalizations: there is nothing worse than women who kill their own husbands and Clytemnestra’s behaviour has brought shame to all women, including the virtuous ones (427–34). In his reaction Odysseus appears to modify this general claim; it is only the Atrides who have been unfortunate with regard to their wives (436–9). Agamemnon, persevering in his general mood of misogyny, urges Odysseus to be cautious towards *Penelope (441–3), but then corrects himself: Odysseus need not fear Penelope (444–6). He then lets his thoughts trail off to the moment of departure for Troy, when Penelope was still a young bride and Telemachus a baby (447–9a; the *‘left behind’ motif). From the remote past he moves on to the present – the present, that is, of the thirteenth year of Odysseus’ absence – Telemachus happily sitting among the men at a meal (cf. Anticlea in 184–6), and the future, the reunion between Odysseus and Telemachus (449b–451). This reminds him again of his own unhappy fate (Clytemnestra killed him before he was able to greet his son) and the bitterness of this memory then makes him repeat his warning in 441–3 (452–6; κρύβην = κεκρυμμένον) and his generalization about the untrustworthiness of women. Thus, on the one hand, Penelope’s loyalty is emphatically contrasted to Clytemnestra’s shamelessness, while on the other hand, her individual goodness is framed – and thereby potentially questioned – by generaliza-

---

tions about the wickedness of women. It will turn out that the latter view has the stronger impact on Odysseus, who, under the influence of Athena, adopts a cautious approach towards Penelope; cf. Introduction to 19.

Throughout the *Odyssey* Penelope is compared to Clytemnestra (explicitly here and in 24.191–202n., implicitly in the ‘Oresteia’ story) and Helen (implicitly in 4.234–89n.; explicitly in 23.209–30n.). These comparisons (i) before the reunion with Odysseus, add to the suspense (will Penelope turn out to be a Clytemnestra, who marries another man during the absence of her husband and kills him on his return, or a Helen, who gives in to her erotic desire for a stranger, later comes to regret this, and, either intentionally or foolishly, endangers her disguised husband), and (ii) after the reunion, add to her *kleos* (no, she has not made the same mistake as Helen or committed the same crimes as Clytemnestra).

For the relevance of Agamemnon being killed during a banquet (411, 415, 419–20), cf. 4.512–49n.

438 Odysseus is more critical of Helen than most Homeric characters.

463–4 The narratees have more recent information than Odysseus: they know from 1.298–300 and 3.306–8 that Orestes lives and has avenged his father’s murder.

467–70 Just as Agamemnon comes surrounded by the followers who were killed together with him, Achilles is accompanied by other heroes, who are listed in a brief *catalogue*. This is no random collection of names (cf. the repetition in 24.15–18): Achilles is surrounded by his dearest friend (Patroclus; cf. 24.77), his closest companion after the death of Patroclus (Antilochus; cf. 24.78–9), and the best warrior next to himself (Ajax). Of these three heroes, one (Ajax) will play a role in the ensuing scene. For Antilochus, cf. 3.109–12n.

471–540 The encounter with Achilles consists of four speeches, the overarching structure of which is first parallel †, then reverse †, and in which the usual three topics are dealt with:

| Achilles | A | Why did you come to Hades (473–5), ('descent' topic) |
| B | where only the senseless dead live (476)? |

473–6 The tone of Achilles’ question is a mixture of admiration (for Odysseus’ daring), incredulity (why would anyone want to go to a place where there are only ‘senseless dead’ and ‘ghosts of dead men’), and resentment (it is typical of a ‘foolhardy’ man like Odysseus to undertake such an ‘outrageous’ enterprise). We are prepared for Achilles’ emotional outburst in 488–91, where he gives expression to his hatred of ‘life’ in the Underworld.

482–91 Achilles’ passionate plea for life (even without honour) instead of death (with honour), contrasts with the choice he makes in the Iliad: a brief but heroic life instead of a long but insignificant one, kleos instead of nostos (cf. II. 9.410–16). However, it is fully understandable in the present context. (i) It is typical of Achilles that he does not beat about the bush (cf. II. 9.307–13); death is terrible and there is no way of denying or softening that fact (as the ever tactful and diplomatic Odysseus tried to do in 482–6). (ii) It is typical of the Odyssean heroes that they look back on the Trojan War with

---

sorrow, despite the fact that it ended in victory for them; cf. 3.103–17n. Having opted for a short but heroic life, Achilles now realizes how high a price he has paid. (iii) It is typical of the Odyssean narrator that he brings Odysseus and Achilles together and each time has Odysseus come out best. In 8.73–82n., Demodocus’ first song, we hear of Odysseus and Achilles quarrelling (presumably over how to take Troy, by force or by trick), a quarrel which, as the song about the Wooden Horse makes clear, was won by Odysseus. Here the narrator makes Achilles, the man who chose to give up his nostos in order to win kleos, tell Odysseus, the man who is clinging to his nostos against all odds, how good it is to live. And finally, in 24.1–204n., Agamemnon addresses Achilles and – the absent – Odysseus, calling both of them fortunate, the former because of the kleos of his heroic death on the battlefield, the latter because of the kleos of his loyal wife. Although that time Achilles does not reply, the narratees will conclude, on account of his words in Book 11, that Odysseus is the more fortunate of the two.


498–503 For Achilles’ nostalgic wish, ‘I am no longer such as I was, when... If only I could come, being such a one’, cf. 1.253–69n.

506–37 Odysseus’ report on Neoptolemus is an instance of well-ordered storytelling: it has a beginning (the moment Neoptolemus departs from Scyrus to Troy: 508–9) and end (the moment when, unscathed and laden with rich booty, he leaves Troy: 534–7); in the middle it deals with Neoptolemus’ accomplishments as ‘doer of deeds and speaker of words’ (the Homeric ideal of a hero; cf. 2.270–80 and Il. 9.443), first in general (510–18, note the iterative optatives, -σκ- imperfects, ‘always’, and ‘never’), and then in detail (one of his victories: 519–22, an anecdote: 523–32).

517–20 An instance of the *‘recusatio’ motif.

523–32 This is the third time the story of the *Wooden Horse is recounted in the Odyssey. Though Odysseus does not neglect his own role, as leader of the expedition, and that of Epeus, as builder of the Horse (cf. 8.493–4), the main focus is, of course, on Neoptolemus. To bring to the fore Neoptolemus’ courage, Odysseus introduces the fear of the other Greeks, a detail which is lacking in the other versions. The contrast is emphasized through the *(all) the others... but X alone...’ motif. A possible ‘key’ function † of this story might be to prepare the narratees for Telemachus’ role in the second half of the poem as Odysseus’ youthful and courageous helper.
537 As often, a speech ends with a *gnomic utterance.

538–40 The conclusion of the encounter with Achilles brings the only happy note in the gloomy Nekuia. The report of his son’s heroic splendour seems to restore the father’s own self-esteem, since he strides away with the typical ‘large steps’ of heroes (cf. Il. 15.686).

541–67 The meeting with Ajax consists, significantly, of only one speech; Ajax does not respond to Odysseus’ attempt at reconciliation. His speech deals with the ‘death’ topic in a special way: the manner of Ajax’ death (suicide) is glossed over, and instead it focuses on its cause (the contest over Achilles’ armour) and effect (excessive grief on the part of the Greeks).

Odysseus-narrator leads up to his conciliatory speech by an external analepsis † (544–51), which takes the form of an epic regression †:

Ajax was angry,

C because of the **victory** (544b),
B which I won when the dispute over Achilles’ arms was **judged** (545–6a),
A which his mother [Thetis] set up (546b).
B’ The sons of the Trojans and Athena **judged** (547).
C’ I wish I had never won this **victory** (548),
D for it led to the death of the second-best fighter of the Greeks after Achilles (549–51).

We see that even as he is addressing his narratees (the Phaeacians), Odysseus is already exculpating himself (stressing the divine dimensions of the fatal contest and judgement), showing his regret, and lavishly praising his former rival (550–1 ≈ 469–70 ≈ Il. 17.279–80). All these elements recur in his speech to Ajax (553–62), which has ring form †:

A Are you never going to **forget your anger** towards me because of the accursed arms (553–5)?
(χόλου picks up κεχολωμένη in 544, but instead of referring to the ‘victory’, Odysseus speaks of ‘arms’, immediately adding the word ‘accursed’, to show his dislike of his own victory; cf. 548)
B The gods have turned the arms into ‘a bane’ for the Greeks (555).
(again Odysseus expresses his dislike; at the same time, he introduces the gods by way of preparation for 558–60)
C They have robbed us of our best defender, and we grieved as much after your death as after Achilles’ death (556–8a). (as in 550–1, Odysseus praises Ajax in Iliadic terms; cf. 7.219; 11.485; 17.128, where the latter’s shield is, symbolically, compared to a ‘tower’. Whereas in 551 he called Ajax second-best after Achilles, he now goes one step further, calling him the equal of Achilles, in terms of the grief of the Greeks over their deaths)

B’ Zeus is to blame (558b–560). (whereas in 546–7 he mentioned Athena, Odysseus now points to Zeus himself as the one responsible for Ajax’s defeat and hence his death)

A’ But come here and give up your anger (561–2).

541–6 The *(all) the others . . . but X alone’ motif singles out Ajax, who is standing aloof, and not joining in the conversation; it prepares for his refusal to talk to Odysseus.

563–4 Odysseus follows Ajax with his gaze as he enters Hades, which creates the transition to a description of various scenes within Hades from 568 onwards: no ghosts come up to him now; instead, Odysseus looks into Hades (from his position at the trench at the entrance: cf. 627–9) and is able to see a number of heroes in situ. (How exactly Odysseus can see all these scenes from his position is not explained.) The change of perspective has been prepared for in 539, where Odysseus sees Achilles walking away across the ‘field of asphodel’, which is part of Hades (cf. 573). It is occasioned by the fact that he is now dealing with ghosts who are active in some way or another, as judge (Minos), hunter (Orion, Heracles), or sinner undergoing punishment (Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus), and therefore cannot approach him.

565–7 Odysseus uses an ‘if not’-situation † to cover up what was in fact a failure to appease Ajax: ‘then he would have talked to me, and I to him, but I wanted to see the ghosts of the other dead’.

568–635 The *Catalogue of heroes consists of a series of six entries, marked by refrain-composition †: ‘there I saw X’ (568), ‘after him I saw X’ (572, 601), ‘and X I saw’ (576, 582, 593). The last entry, Heracles, is a hybrid form: it starts out as a regular catalogue entry (introduction with ‘and after him I saw X’ in 601, followed by a description of what Heracles is doing in 605–14), but from 615 on it begins to resemble a meeting of the type which
Odysseus previously had with Agamemnon, etc. (with Heracles recognizing Odysseus and talking to him).

While the Catalogue of heroines contains genealogies, the Catalogue of heroes consists of a description of the scenes which Odysseus is watching. His focalization is clear: Orion and the boulders of Sisyphus are *πελαγός, ‘monstrously big’ (572, 594); Tantalus and Sisyphus are suffering ‘hard/strong pains or griefs’ (582, 593); Tantalus is twice referred to, pathetically, as an ‘old man’ (585, 591); the drying up of the much desired water is ascribed to a διψάνω (587); the boulder which rolls down the hill is called ‘shameless’ (598; cf. Il. 4.521; 13.139); Heracles ‘resembles dark night’ (606; on two more occasions persons are compared to night, Il. 1.47 and 12.463, but only here to dark night), is ‘looking around him with frightening glances’ (608, the expression recurs only once, 24.179, in a speech), and has a ‘terrifying’ baldrick (613–14); past tenses are used to describe events which in themselves are omnitemporal (cf. 5.63–75n.).

601–27 The meeting with Heracles consists of only one speech; Heracles’ words are a comment rather than the opening of a conversation. It deals with the ‘descent’ topic. Instead of asking Odysseus why he has come to Hades, Heracles himself makes a suggestion: presumably ‘poor’ Odysseus ‘endures some sort of bad fate’, like Heracles himself when he had to perform many labours, one of which was to descend into Hades to get Cerberus (cf. Il. 8.366–9). In the Odyssey Heracles19 twice functions as a foil to Odysseus: in 8.223–8 Odysseus distances himself from this brutal, lonely hero of the past, who even dared to attack the gods (cf. Il. 5.392–404), and in 21.13–38 this hero’s inhospitable behaviour is contrasted with Odysseus’ guest-friendship. On the present occasion, however, the two heroes are placed on a par: they both suffer from a ‘bad fate’ (618), which means that they have to endure ‘endless misery’ (620–1). The knowledge that he is not the only hero to suffer, indeed, that he shares his fate with a son of Zeus, must be a solace to Odysseus; this is a well-known consolatory motif (cf. Achilles in Il. 21.106–13). In this sense, Heracles’ words form a fitting conclusion to Odysseus’ visit to the dead.

605 The sharp, piercing cry of the ghosts is compared to the cry of birds

19 Galinsky (1972: 9–14).
(cf. *II. 3.2–7*); the comparison is particularly apt in that the ghosts are said to leave the body flying (*II. 16.856 = 22.362*).

630–5 Odysseus prepares for the close of the ‘Underworld’ episode, first by inserting an ‘if not’-situation †, which indicates which heroes he would have liked to see (the names of Theseus and Perithous in 631 follow logically after Heracles, since they are also mortals who descended into the Underworld), and then by repeating a detail from the beginning of his tale, his being scared by the sight and, above all, the sound of the ghosts (632–3 ≈ 36–7 + 43). This time, the idea that Persephone might send up the head of Gorgo makes him decide to leave.

636–40 A highly abbreviated instance of the *‘departure by ship’ type-scene*: (ii) Odysseus makes his way to the ship (636); (vii) the crew goes on board (doubled into order and execution: 637–8); (viii) the moorings are cast off (order only: 637); (ix) the crew rows (638–40a; unique detail of the current of Oceanus helping them); and then (x) a favourable wind blows (640b).
This book contains Odysseus’ last three adventures, two short ones (Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis), followed by one long one (Thrinacia); cf. Introduction to 9. These adventures are preceded by Circe’s instructions, and end with the storm which robs our hero of his last companions and brings him to Calypso and thereby to the end of his story.

1–143 This scene forms the last phase in the ‘Circe’ adventure; cf. 10.469–574n. When Circe told Odysseus to go to the Underworld, she did not explicitly say that he was to return to her. However, her duty as hostess to escort him home is still in a state of suspension (cf. 10.475–95n.), and, in any case, Odysseus has to return to Aeaea to bury Elpenor (cf. 11.69–70, where the latter assumes that Odysseus will return to Circe’s island). Odysseus does not go back to Circe’s palace, but she comes down to the beach to meet him.

1–7 The beginning of the episode follows the pattern of many adventures (cf. 9.82–105n.): (i) landing, including a – second – introduction of Aeaea (1–6); (ii) initial activities, here sleeping (7); (iv) Odysseus sends out men, here to fetch the body of Elpenor (8–10). Whereas on the occasion of the first arrival at Aeaea, the island was introduced as the seat of Circe (10.135–9), it is now characterized as the seat of Eos and the place where Helius rises each day; this may be partly for variation, partly by way of a seed†, since Helius will soon play an important role in the ‘Thrinacia’ adventure.

8–15 The execution of Elpenor’s wish to be buried (11.74–8). Verbal echoes underscore the correspondence between word and deed: νεκρός τ’ ἐκάθη καὶ τεύχεα νεκροῦ (13)≈κακκήια σὺν τεύχεσι (11.74); τύμβον χεύσαντες (14)≈σῆμα . . . μοι χεύσαι (11.75); πῆξαμεν . . . τύμβῳ . . . ἐρετμόν (15)≈πῆξαι . . . ἐπὶ τύμβῳ ἐρετμόν (11.77).
Circe is brought (back) on stage through the common Homeric technique of having her see Odysseus and his men; cf. 1.328–9n.

Circe immediately resumes her role as hostess, offering the Greeks food (cf. 10.460–8) and addressing them kindly. In her speech, she praises their daring in executing their mission to the Underworld and thereby ‘dying twice’ (cf. 10.496–9n.), invites them to spend the rest of the day eating, and announces that the next morning she will give them instructions for a safe voyage home. In fact, she will instruct only Odysseus, while his companions are sleeping (37–141), which will allow him to pass on her information selectively to his men; cf. 10.475–95n.

As in the case of Aeolus, who was intent on ensuring a speedy voyage home for the Greeks (10.23–6), Circe intends the Greeks not to suffer harm through ‘grievous wicked designs’. Whereas in 10.26–7 Odysseus-narrator revealed, in the form of a prolepsis, that Aeolus’ help would come to nought, here he provides no such clue.

A summary † (‘she asked me everything’, ‘I told her all’) takes the place of a full report in direct speech. It is important for Circe to be informed about Odysseus’ visit, above all his meeting with Tiresias, but a detailed account of his visit would be cumbersome here.

Circe’s detailed instructions fill in the gap left by Tiresias in Book 11, the stations between Aeaea and Thrinacia, and repeat in expanded form the most important station of all, Thrinacia; for the division of labour between goddess and seer, cf. 11.100–37n. Circe’s instructions make Odysseus’ last adventures different from the previous ones: he now knows in advance what awaits him. The effect on the narratees of this prolepsis † is suspense: how is Odysseus going to surmount the obstacles he will find on his path? It will turn out that Odysseus (226–33) and – more dramatically – his companions (279–93, 339–65) do not always follow the instructions they have been given and that despite Circe’s good intentions in 26–7, the Greeks suffer sorrows on sea and on land’.

Circe’s speech is an instance of prior narration1 (the narration of events which have yet to take place); cf. Eidōthea in 4.399–424 and Tiresias in 11.100–37. She combines this prior narration (future tense) with description (present tense and epic τε), and instructions on how to act (typically in the form of imperatival infinitives; cf. 10.505–40n.), as follows:

The ‘Sirens’ adventure announced here will take place in 153–200. The Sirens enchant passers-by with their songs and thereby rob them of their nostos. Thus this adventure closely resembles that of the Lotus-Eaters, who rob visitors of their nostos by means of their food (9.82–104). The location of the Sirens, on a flowery ‘meadow’ (45, 159), also adds to their attraction; meadows typically belong to a locus amoenus (cf. 5.72 and 6.292). Unlike the victims of the Lotus-Eaters, those of the Sirens actually die (45–6), whereby the exact manner of their death is not indicated (do they forget to steer and are then shipwrecked? Or do they waste away because they are unable to break the spell of the Sirens’ endless song?).

The Sirens’ song may be seen as a supreme – but fatal – variant of the heroic song of singers. (i) It enchants (θελγοῦσιν: 40, 44) and provides delight (τερπόμενος/τερψίμενος: 52, 188); cf. 8.83–92n. (ii) It recounts events such as the Trojan War (189–90). (iii) Whereas the singers become omniscient through the help of the Muses, the Sirens are themselves omniscient: ἴδμεν...πάνθ’ ὄσ’...ἴδμεν δ’ ὀσσα... (189–91) ≈ ἵστε τε πάντα (II. 2.485). The Sirens even know the future; the subjunctive γένηται in 191 is best taken as having a future sense, as in 6.201 and 16.437, where it stands on

---

Sirens  prior narration  39a (‘you will first come to’)
description  39b–46 (epic τε in 39 and 44)
instruction  47–54 (imperatival infinitives in 47, bis)

Planctae  prior narration  55–7a (‘I cannot tell what your way will be’)
instruction  57b–58 (imperatival infinitive in 58)
description  59–72 (epic τε in 62 and 64)

Scylla  description  73–100 + 118–23 (epic τε in 90, 93, 99)

Charybdis  prior narration  101 (‘you will see’)
description  101–7
instruction  108–10 + 124–5 (imperatival infinitives in 109, 124, bis)
prior narration  126 (‘she will stop her’)

Thrinacia  prior narration  127a (‘you will come to’)
description  127b–136
instruction +  137–41 (‘if you do A, then you might/will...’)
prior narration

---

a par with the future ἔσσεται. This means that their song is actually without end.

55–126 Circe announces that Odysseus can choose to travel via the Planctae or via Scylla and Charybdis (55–8), but in 81–2 she proceeds on the assumption that Odysseus will pass Scylla, and in 108–10 advises him to head for Scylla, thereby implicitly eliminating the alternative of the Planctae. Odysseus will indeed confront Scylla (201–59) and later, after the storm which follows the ‘Thrinacia’ adventure, Charybdis as well (426–47).

For the most part the description of Scylla, Charybdis, and the Planctae makes use of the *‘description by negation’ technique (four times in the special form of the *‘(not) even + hyperbole’ motif), which highlights their insurmountability: ‘no birds, not even doves pass along the Planctae’ (62–3), ‘no ship has yet escaped (the Planctae)’ (66), the dark cloud ‘never draws away from it (the peak), nor does sunlight ever hold it’ (75–6), ‘no man could climb the rocks (in which Scylla’s cave finds itself), not even if he had twenty hands and twenty feet’ (77–8), ‘no man could reach Scylla’s cave with an arrow’ (83–4), ‘no one, not even a god, encountering Scylla would be pleased with the sight’ (87–8), ‘never as yet have sailors boasted of passing Scylla without any loss of men’ (98–9), ‘not even Poseidon could save you from that danger (Charybdis)’ (106–7).

In other ways, too, Circe stresses the frightening features of these phenomena: cf. ‘destructive fire’ (68), the ‘if not’-situation † ‘even Argo would have been driven on the great rocks, but for Hera’s help’ (71–2), ‘a dark cloud’ (74–5; the expression in 405 refers to a storm cloud, in Il. 20.417–18, metaphorically, to death), ‘turned toward the west, to Erebos’ (81; only here is the ominous ‘to Erebos’ added), δεινός, ‘terrible’ (85, 94, 106), ἄκακος, ‘evil’ (87, 107), ‘a frightening head’ (91), and ‘teeth full of dark death’ (92).

The detail of the fig tree under which Charybdis finds herself (103–4), is a seed †: it will be through this tree that Odysseus later rescues himself (432–8).

61 For the phenomenon of ‘language of the gods’, cf. 10.305n.

69–72 This is the most extensive reference to the Argonaut expedition in the Homeric epics; cf. 10.137 (Aeetes is called ‘baleful’, a possible allusion to the fact that he set Jason the impossible task of winning the Golden

---

Fleece); *Il. 7.467–9; 21.40–1; and 23.747 (where we hear about a son whom
Jason fathered with the Lemnian Hypsipyle). The reference is apt coming
from Circe, who is a sister of Aeetes (10.137). The Argo is called ‘an object of
interest to all’, i.e., ‘well known’; cf. Odysseus’ self-introduction in 9.19–20
(‘I am Odysseus, who is an object of interest to all people, because of my
tricks’).

110 Six is a typical number † in the *Apologue*; cf. 9.60–1n.

111–26 Circe’s series of instructions is interrupted, because Odysseus
reacts to her advice to ‘sacrifice’ six men rather than losing them all
(109–10). His suggestion that it would be better to ‘fight Scylla off when she
harms my companions’ (112–14) is rejected as impossible by Circe (116–26),
who then continues her instructions (127ff.). This little exchange (i) creates
a short break in Circe’s long speech (cf. the Intermezzo in Odysseus’
*Apologue*) and lends emphasis to her injunction not to fight Scylla (advice
which Odysseus ultimately will ignore). (ii) Adds to the characterization of
*Odysseus as a solicitous leader; note the *sympathetic* dative *μοι* in 114,
stressing the emotional link between leader and men. His strong reaction in
258–9 to the death of the six men is prepared for. (iii) Points up Odysseus’
confrontation with the limitations of the heroic code (cf. Introduction to 9);
in certain situations it is better to flee than to fight.

127–41 The third and last adventure mentioned by Circe is Thrinacia,
which will take place in 260–402. This station was mentioned by Tiresias,
too (11.104–13); cf. 37–141n. She partly repeats the seer’s words (137–41 =
11.110–14; the repetition underscores the importance of the warning), and
partly expands them (129–34), giving detailed information about Helius’
cattle and their custodians (two daughters of Helius, one of whom,
Lampetia, will play a role in 374–5). Herself also a daughter of Helius (cf.
10.137), Circe is in a position to provide such detailed information.

142–52 The execution of Circe’s instructions is set into motion without
further delay. An ‘immediate’ sunrise (cf. 6.48–9n.) is followed by Circe’s
departure (her ‘farewell’ scene has already taken place: 10.475–95n.) and
an abbreviated *departure by ship* type-scene: (i) Odysseus makes his
way to the ship (144); (vii) the crew go on board (145a–146; doubled into
order and execution); (viii) the moorings are cast off (145b; only orders);
(ix) the crew row (147); (x) Circe sends a favourable wind (148–50); (xi) the
sailing is prepared (151). The actual sea voyage is, as usual, recounted only
briefly (152).
153–200 Sirens. In the case of Scylla and Charybdis and Thrinacia, Odysseus first perceives phenomena which warn him that he is approaching one of the dangers described by Circe, and then addresses his men, instructing them on how to deal with it. Here the order is reversed: Odysseus first addresses his men and only then perceives (hears) the Sirens. The reversal is logical, in that Odysseus must take precautions before he hears (the dangerous song of) the Sirens.

153–64 The first in a series of speeches in which Odysseus passes on the information given to him by Circe; cf. 206–25, 270–6 + 295–302 + 320–3. In all these cases, he adapts the information to suit his addressees, the companions. Here he partly mirrors Circe’s words (158a = 39a, 162 = 51, 163–4 ≈53–4), but leaves out both the attractive side of the Sirens, referring to them only as ‘divine’ (158), and their dangerous side; says that Circe ‘urged him’ to listen, whereas in fact she said ‘if you want to listen yourself’; and stresses the disagreeable side of his own position (he will be fastened by ‘a grievous binding’: 160–1). These modifications are made in order to avoid alarming his companions, while at the same time making them accept the fact that he alone will listen to the Sirens.

Odysseus precedes his information by a preamble, which serves to add weight to what follows. He emphatically declares that he wants to share the prophecies which Circe revealed to him with his men, so that, whether they die or survive, they will at least do so ‘while knowing’ (what befalls them).

165–200 When we compare Odysseus’ – detailed – narration of the actual events with Circe’s prophecy (39–54) and his instructions to his men (158–64), we see that the encounter proceeds largely as foreseen:

165–7 They reach the island, sped by a harmless wind. Cf. 39a

168–72 A lull forces the men to row. New element, which makes it easier for Odysseus to hear the Sirens, but also increases the danger: the ship is now moving more slowly, which means that Odysseus will be exposed to the power of the Sirens for a longer time (cf. the companions speeding up their rowing in 194 in response to Odysseus’ demand to be released)
173–7 Odysseus puts wax in the ears of his men. **Expanded version of 47–9**

178–80 Companions bind Odysseus to mast, and they themselves row on.  

181–92 The Sirens address Odysseus with a song. **Expanded version of 52**

192–4 Odysseus asks to be released. 193 ≈ 53 ≈ 163.  
Note the realistic detail of Odysseus having to nod to his companions, who of course cannot hear him.

195–6 Perimedes and Eurylochus fasten Odysseus to the mast with even more bindings. 196 ≈ 54 ≈ 164. The same couple of names in 11.23

197–200 When the Sirens are no longer to be heard, the companions remove the wax and loosen Odysseus’ bonds. **New, but natural extension**

165–7 The device of *simultaneity adds to the suspense: while Odysseus is warning his men of the dangers of the Sirens, their ship has already reached the island.

169 Odysseus typically ascribes the unforeseen and dangerous lull to a *δεσιμων*.

181–3 The ‘as far . . . as a shouting voice carries’ motif is found four times in Homer (only in the *Odyssey*): cf. 5.400–1; 6.294; and 9.473–4.5 It is a way of indicating a longish distance, and is used when a person approaches or leaves a place/person. Except for 6.294, the literal meaning (within earshot) is relevant; it is particularly apt here, in the context of the Sirens singing.

183–92 The Sirens’ song is exactly as predicted by Circe: its sound is ‘clear’ (183; cf. 44), ‘honesweet’ (187), and ‘beautiful’ (192), and its contents enchanting (Odysseus wants to listen to them: 192–3, cf. 44): they recognize Odysseus on sight (thereby proving their own claim of omniscience), flatter him (calling him ‘man of many tales’ and ‘great glory of the Greeks’), and promise to sing about his own heroic past, the Trojan War, and the future (in other words, to offer him knowledge which is otherwise imparted only to singers or seers). This offer must hold a special appeal for

---

an intellectually curious man like *Odysseus. For the relation to heroic song, cf. 39–54n.

At the same time, their self-advertisement is both ominous (‘no man has ever as yet sailed past without listening to our song’; cf. the ‘never as yet’ of 66 and 98) and dishonest (‘but he returns having enjoyed himself and knowing more’; in fact, the Sirens’ listeners never return home; cf. 42–3).

184 πολύταυρος, ‘man of many tales’ is used only of Odysseus (four times, always in direct speech, three of these in the Iliad). Like *πολύτρωτος it seems to combine an active meaning (‘a man who tells many tales’) and a passive one (‘a man about whom many tales are told’). Both meanings are contextually apt, in that the Sirens are flattering Odysseus (he is famous) and luring him (if he listens to them, he will be able to tell more tales).

201–59 Planctae, Scylla and Charybdis. The confrontation takes place more or less as prescribed by Circe (55–126), even though Odysseus fails to carry out one of her instructions. While she described the dangers as three independent entities, Odysseus’ report places them in a sequence; we follow his frightened and fascinated gaze, as he looks at one spectacle after the other:

202 Odysseus sees smoke and big waves and hears a roaring sound (= the Planctae; cf. 59–72).
203–22 He instructs his steersman to avoid the smoke and waves and to head for ‘the rock’ (= cave of Scylla).
(he follows Circe’s instructions: 108–10)
223–33 He arms himself and looks for Scylla, but does not see her.
(he neglects Circe’s instruction not to arm himself: 116–26)
234–44 Then his attention is absorbed by Charybdis (cf. 101–7)
245–59 and when he looks at his ship and men again, Scylla has already taken six companions and he has to watch passively as they are devoured.
(Circe’s fear that Scylla may attack a second time, cf. 121–3, does not materialize, because Odysseus has been so absorbed by the spectacle of Charybdis that he is too late to fight her. Hence, there is no need to call on Scylla’s mother for help; cf. 124–6)

206–25 Again (cf. 153–64n.), Odysseus passes on information from Circe to his men, even more selectively than the first time: he does not mention the names of either Planctae, Scylla or Charybdis, nor does he give
any specific indication about the kind of dangers they represent, referring to the Planctae merely as ‘that smoke and those waves’ (219) and to Scylla as ‘the rock’ (220). This time the reason for such selectivity is spelled out by Odysseus-narrator in a *speech evaluation (223–5): had he told them about Scylla, ‘an unmanageable danger’ (cf. 118–20), his frightened men might have stopped rowing altogether.

Because his men have lost heart (203–5), Odysseus’ speech takes the form of a parainesis (cf. 22.69–78n.): urgent address (‘Friends, we are not inexperienced in dangers’) – situation (‘This is not a greater danger than the Cyclops, which we also managed to survive’) – call to action (‘Now let us all do as I propose: you, companions, go on rowing, while you, steersman, avoid the smoke and waves and aim for the rock’).

208–12 The ‘Cyclops’ adventure, recounted in full in 9.106–566, again serves as a hortatory paradigm in 20.18–21, and as a dissuasive paradigm in 10.435–7. Odysseus’ formulation (the Cyclops held us in his cave by force and violence, but we escaped through my courage, counsel and intelligence) leaves no doubt that this adventure was an instance of the *‘cunning versus force’ theme.

226–7 The unique combination ἐφημοσύνης ὀλεγεινής, ‘grievous injunction’, contains, in a nutshell, Odysseus’ motive for not listening to Circe; he still cannot accept the idea that it is better to sacrifice six men than to lose all of them; cf. 111–26.

234–44 Odysseus’ description of Charybdis is longer than Circe’s (cf. 101–7), the length corresponding to his fascination for the terrifying spectacle. Circe’s δεινὸν is mirrored in 236 and 242 and her ‘three times a day she vomits the water up, three times she sucks it down’ recurs in Odysseus’ use of iteratives (ἐναμορμύρεσκε, φάνεσκε (bis)) and iterative optatives (ἐξέμεσει, ἀναβρόξειε). Odysseus’ account is a real eyewitness report (his frightened focalization is explicitly noted: 244), which graphically describes what he sees (the foam, the seething water, and the bottom of the sea, ‘dark with sand’; note also the vertical movement of his gaze, looking up in 238, and then down in 242), and evokes, through his choice of onomatopoeic words (ἀνευρροῖβησε, ἀναμορμύρησε, ἀναβρόξειε, ὑβεβρύχησε), what he hears.6

244–6 The device of *simultaneity explains how Scylla can devour six of Odysseus’ men: he is too distracted by the sight of Charybdis. For the typical number † six, cf. 9.60–1n.

245–59 Since Circe had already given a detailed description of Scylla’s physique (85–92), Odysseus’ narration can concentrate on the pathos of his men’s terrible death: the *sympathetic dative *μοι (245), which stresses the close relationship between Odysseus and his men; the brief introduction of the otherwise anonymous victims (246: they were six of his best men); the companions shouting Odysseus’ name (249–50) and stretching out their hands to him for help (257. An instance of the ‘death near to friends’ motif; cf. II. 4.522–3; 13.548–9; 14.495–6; and 21.115–167); the pathetic *ὑπερτάσσον, ‘for the last time’ (250); the ‘fish’ simile (251–5); and the emotional coda ‘that was the most pitiful scene that my eyes have looked on in my sufferings as I explored the routes over the water’ (258–9; cf. 8.519–20).

251–5 Odysseus-narrator’s use of a *‘fish’ simile is triggered by Scylla’s habit of ‘fishing’ for sea creatures (95–7). Its primary function, to illustrate the convulsions of the men as they are hauled out of the sea and onto the land of Scylla’s cave, is ‘advertised’ (ἀστοίροντα = ἀστοίροντες). Its secondary function is to convey pathos: the imagery of the fish suggests the companions’ helplessness.

260–425 Thrinacia.8 This adventure occupies a special place in Odysseus’ wanderings: it is mentioned in the proem (cf. 1.6–9n.), twice prophesied (by Tiresias in 11.104–15, and Circe in 12.127–41), foreshadowed in the episodes of the Ciconians (9.39–66n.) and Aeolus (10.1–79n.), and recalled in 19.273–7. Its importance lies in the fact that the fate of the companions, who die through their own *ἀτασκελίσατι, ‘reckless behaviour’ (300), after having been warned many times, resembles that of the Suitors; this episode is therefore crucial for the ‘key’ function of the Apologue; cf. Introduction to 9. Of course, there is a difference in degree between the companions’ reckless behaviour and that of the Suitors; the latter act of their own free will, while the former find themselves in dire straits and are led by hunger to act as they do.

The episode displays the following structure:

264–6 (perception) Odysseus hears the bleating of the cattle and sheep. This happens ‘while still at sea’, which will allow him to attempt to avoid the island altogether.

(this is a new element: the prophecies of Circe and Tiresias both start

7 Griffin (1980: 112–15).
from the moment when Odysseus lands on Thrinacia; cf. 11.106–7 and 12.127)

266–9 Recalling the warnings of Circe and Tiresias,

270–6 (first instruction) Odysseus proposes that they avoid the island of Helius.

277–94 Eurylochus puts forward a counter-proposal, to put in at the island just for the night.

295–302 (second instruction) Odysseus has to give in, but in a second speech he asks his men to swear not to kill any cattle they might find on the island.

303–18 A complication: a storm forces them to haul their ship ashore. (this was not foreseen by either Tiresias or Circe)

319–23 (third instruction) Odysseus (foreseeing that the bad weather may continue, forcing them to stay on the island for a longer time) warns his men not to touch Helius’ cattle.

324–32 Adverse winds continue to blow, causing hunger.

333–51 While Odysseus is asleep, Eurylochus puts forward a second counter-proposal, to eat Helius’ cattle and afterwards appease the god.

352–73 The companions slaughter Helius’ cattle.

374–90 Helius asks Zeus to punish the Greeks.

391–425 A storm wrecks Odysseus’ ship and kills all his companions. He himself survives on an improvised raft.

Helius’ anger is an instance of the *divine anger* motif. As usual (cf. 3.130–66n.), it is executed by Zeus (385–8, 399, 405, 416). In a sense, Helius’ anger is a reduplication of *Poseidon’s wrath, which from the Cyclops’ adventure onwards had put a curse on Odysseus and his return. It is brief, but serves to rob Odysseus of his last ship and his last companions, leaving Poseidon’s wrath to hit Odysseus.

Odysseus is the sole survivor of this adventure, since he alone does not eat Helius’ cattle. His exceptional position had been adumbrated by Tiresias and Circe (11.112–13 = 12.139–40) and is confirmed in the Olympian scene (cf. 374–90n.). Odysseus’ stance is also reflected in his report of the encounter: Thrinacia is called an ἐμὸναν ἄστον, ‘an excellent island’ (261; a unique combination), the cattle ‘beautiful’ (262, 355), and Helius τερψιμβρότου, ‘delighting mortals’ (only 269 and 274). Conversely,
Eurylochus’ counter-proposals are called ‘a dire word’ (278), and ‘a bad plan’ (339), inspired by a *δαμνών, who ‘planned mischief’ (295). The adventure adds to the characterization of *Odysseus as ‘much-enduring’: he would have continued sailing, despite fatigue and sleep, if it had not been for Eurylochus’ intervention (cf. 279–85), and despite his hunger, he abstains from eating Helius’ cattle right to the end.

270–6 As is his custom (cf. 153–64n.), Odysseus repeats – some of – the information Circe had given him at the moment a new danger approaches (127–41). This time Eurylochus and the force of circumstances will force him to disclose more of his knowledge in two additional speeches:

270–6 Avoid the island of Helius, for ‘a most terrible evil’ awaits us here. (he makes no mention of the cattle)
295–302 Swear to me not to kill ‘in dire reckless behaviour’ any cattle you might find on the island.
320–3 Don’t kill the cattle, because they belong to Helius, and we might suffer something as a result. (he does not reveal that eating the cattle will cost them their lives)

The three speeches are an instance of a triadic structure †. They are warnings, and Odysseus attempts to increase the force of his words in various ways: in his first speech he refers to the fact that he is communicating to them the ‘prophecies of Circe and Tiresias’; in his second speech he asks his men to swear an oath; in the third he replaces Helius’ epithet ‘delighting mortals’ (274) by ‘terrible’ (δεινος) and recalls that this is the god ‘who sees all’ (cf. Tiresias in 11.109; in fact, Helius will not himself see them eating the cattle, but it will be reported to him: 374–5). These emphatic warnings are important in that they stress the companions’ own responsibility for their demise (despite the attenuating circumstances created by their hunger); cf. 260–425n.

278–303 *Eurylochus’ role as Odysseus’ opponent here and in 339–52 has been prepared for in 10.261–73 and 428–38. At that time his attempt to turn the companions against Odysseus misfired and he stood alone; now the companions applaud his suggestions (294, 352) and it is Odysseus who faces the group alone (297).

Eurylochus’ arguments in his first speech are initially reasonable enough; the men are tired, hungry, and sleepy. But gradually he starts exaggerating,
claiming that it is highly dangerous to sail by night because of the winds (there are at least three instances of night-time sailing in the *Odyssey*, 2.434; 4.842; and 13.88–93, none of which records dangerous winds). This intervention, which displays a lack of stamina and a tendency towards exaggeration, prepares for his second, more dramatic speech, when he will actually suggest that they break their oath, disobey their leader, and sacrifice the cattle; an anticipatory doublet †.


297–303 A standard instance of the *oath* type-scene: proposal of the oath (in direct speech: 299–302) and the actual swearing (summarized: 303). The oath exculpates Odysseus (he has done what he could to prevent his men from committing ‘reckless behaviour’: 300) and further incriminates the companions (by eating the cattle, they are not only neglecting the instructions of Tiresias and Circe, but also breaking the oath to their leader).

305–6 A brief *‘harbour’ description, containing the typical elements of shelter against the wind and sweet water.

309–10 A similar example of paying one’s last respects to companions who cannot be buried properly is found in 9.64–6.

312–17 An instance of a *‘storm’ scene (cf. also Appendix D): we find the standard elements of time, divine source, winds, clouds, darkness (this element is somewhat incongruous, in view of the fact that it is night: 312; a genetic explanation would be that we are dealing with the inadvertent use of a formula: 315 = 5.294 = 9.69), and instead of a landing (the Greeks have already landed in 306) we find the dragging of the ship, which until then was moored in the harbour, into a cave.

319–23 For Odysseus’ third warning, cf. 270–6n.

325–38 The situation here closely resembles that of Menelaus in 4.351ff.: the hero is marooned on an island, his men are hungry and have to survive on an – unheroic – diet of fish, the leader sets out and has (Menelaus)/seeks (Odysseus) divine contact. For the similarity between the adventures of Odysseus and Menelaus, cf. 4.351–586n.

325–6 The use of the summary † (one month is described in two lines) brings home the extreme plight of Odysseus and his men.

327–96 For the second time in the *Apologue* Odysseus’ companions create mischief while he is asleep; cf. 10.1–79n. (Aeolus). And again, Odysseus focalizes his sleep differently before and after finding out what
has happened: ‘sweet’ (γλυκύς: 338, a standard epithet of ὑπνοῦς) and ‘refreshing’ (νηδυμός: 366, another standard epithet) versus ‘ruthless’, i.e., ‘bringing mischief’ (νηλαῖ: 372, a unique epithet). For the ‘sleep’ motif in general, cf. 5.491–3n. Odysseus ascribes his sleep to the gods (338 and 370–3), in order to exonerate himself, just as in 10.31–3 it was sheer exhaustion which caused his fatal sleep. Odysseus-narrator does not explain his detailed knowledge of what went on during his sleep; cf. Introduction to 9.

Odysseus-narrator combines the ‘interlace’ technique †, switching rapidly and abruptly between himself, the companions, and the gods, with the ‘interruption’ technique †:9

327–38 I went away from my companions to pray and then fell asleep.
339–65 The companions started to sacrifice the best of the oxen.
366–73 I woke up, started back to the ship, smelled the roasting meat, and sighed: ‘gods, you have ruined me. My companions have perpetrated a great deed’.

374–90 (interruption) The gods decided to punish the companions.
391–6 I arrived at the ship, but the oxen were already dead.
(Odysseus sees his fear confirmed)

The effect of the ‘interruption’ technique is to show that while the companions are still busy sacrificing the cattle, their fate is already being sealed on Olympus.

340–51 The fatal speech in which *Eurylochus persuades the companions to sacrifice the cattle has a clear and simple structure: ‘Listen to my speech, companions, who have suffered evils (it will remain a matter of personal taste whether one regards Eurylochus’ use of this specific opening, which elsewhere, 10.189 and 12.271, is used by Odysseus, as intentional, i.e., as an attempt to take over Odysseus’ role as leader, or as formulaic convenience). All forms of death are grievous, but the most pitiful is death by starvation (a summary priamel †. Eurylochus is exaggerating; the men are starving but not dying: cf. 330–2). (proposal) Let us sacrifice the best oxen to the immortals (Eurylochus tries to give their act an air of piety by mentioning the sacrifice and

leaving out their eating of the meat). (consequences) If we come home, we can build a temple to Helius. Or if the god wrecks our ship, I prefer such instant death to slow starvation.’

353–65 The execution of Eurylochus’ plan takes the form of a ‘sacrifice’ type-scene, of improvised nature (as Odysseus-narrator makes clear through the ‘description by negation’ technique in 358 and 362): the animals are driven together (unique element due to special circumstances: 353–5); (i) preliminaries and prayer (356–8; instead of the customary barley, the Greeks use leaves); (ii) they kill the animals (359); (iii) prepare the sacrificial meat (360–4; instead of wine the Greeks use water for their libations; (v) and prepare the meat for a meal (cutting it up and putting it on the spits: 365). At this point the sequence is broken off, as we turn to Odysseus (cf. 327–96n.). The sacrifice will be continued in 394–8.

374–90 A council of the gods (cf. 1.26–95n.), which takes the special form of a god (Helius) complaining to Zeus about the behaviour of a mortal and asking for punishment; cf. 13.125–87n. It is actually impossible for Odysseus-narrator to report what was going on on Olympus, but a specious explanation (‘I heard it from Calypso, who heard it from Hermes’) allows him to do so here. The reason for this special licence is that the narrator wants his narratees to be informed that the ensuing storm is no ordinary one, but has been sent by Zeus as a punishment for the slaughter of Helius’ cattle.

374–6 In 132–3 we were told that Lampetia was one of the people tending Helius’ cattle. It is not entirely logical that she does not enter the story until this stage; where was she when the Greeks were taking the oxen and starting to sacrifice them?

392–3 Odysseus-narrator no longer bothers to quote his speeches to his men, but confines himself to a summary (‘I blamed one man after the other’).

394–8 Continuation of the ‘sacrifice’ type-scene (see 353–65): (iv) instead of the roasting of the meat (as, e.g., in 3.463, 470), we hear about the hides crawling and the meat lowing. This uncanny phenomenon is related to the very special nature of Helius’ cattle, which never die (cf. 130–1), and is interpreted by Odysseus as a portent; cf. the portent in 20.345–72. Like the Suitors, the companions ignore the portent and spend six days (the summary † has emphatic force) (vi) consuming the meal.

403–25 An instance of a ‘storm’ scene (cf. also Appendix D): place,
cloud, divine source (stressed no fewer than four times, 405, 415, 416, 419, in order to underline that this is no ordinary storm, but a divine punishment), darkness, wind, destruction of the ship (the wind snaps the forestays of the mast, which collapses and kills Odysseus’ helmsman), thunder and lightning, companions fall overboard and drown, waves, Odysseus is the only one who manages to survive on an improvised raft consisting of the keel and mast of his ship bound together. In 426 the storm abates but Odysseus’ troubles are not over yet, since he has to pass Scylla and Charybdis again. His landing will follow in 447–8.

The same storm had been recounted earlier, in much less detail, by Odysseus in 7.248–54.

418 The drowning companions are compared to sea-crows. In maritime contexts comparisons/similes often feature seabirds; cf. 5.51, 337, 353; and 15.479.10

419 Instead of saying that his companions died, Odysseus uses the phrase ‘the god took away their nostos’, thus touching on the central theme of the Odyssey, and in particular echoing the proem: ‘but he [the god Helius] took away the day of their nostos’ (1.9).

426–46 (Scylla and) Charybdis. Having described the workings of Charybdis in detail in 235–43, Odysseus can now concentrate on the way in which he saves himself: while Charybdis sucks up the water, including his improvised raft, he clings to the fig tree, a prop which he had carefully introduced (cf. 103–4), and waits for her to vomit the water up again; it is his proverbial capacity to endure which once again is opportune.

438–41 Odysseus uses a simile † to indicate the point at which Charybdis spits out his improvised raft; for another ‘time’ simile, cf. 13.31–5. There could hardly be a greater contrast between Odysseus’ lonely and desperate situation (clinging to the branches of the fig tree ‘like a bat’) and the civilized and social activities of the man in the simile, which in normal circumstances would be those of Odysseus. Is this how Odysseus managed to survive this ordeal, thinking of his ordinary life in the past (and, as he hopes, the future)? At any rate, as in the case of the ‘Cyclops’ adventure (cf. 9.106–566n.), he uses a ‘culture’ comparison to underline that, as a civilized man, he did not allow nature to defeat him.

447–53 For indications of days travelled, cf. 9.82n. Arriving at the point

---

10 Fränkel (1921: 86–7).
in his tale when he lands on Ogygia and stays with Calypso, Odysseus literally begins to repeat himself (447–9 = 7.253–5) and, realizing this, breaks off his story (cf. 7.297n.). His remark ‘It is hateful to me to tell a story over again’ (452–3) also has *metanarrative significance; cf. Appendix C.
Book 13\(^1\) covers the thirty-fourth and part of the thirty-fifth day; cf. Appendix A. It brings Odysseus’ departure from Scheria (18–80), a ‘sea-voyage’ scene (81–92), ‘landing’ type-scene (93–124), Olympic scene (125–87), and the meeting between Athena and Odysseus, which is a combination of the ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern (187–358) and a ‘god meets mortal’ scene (221–440).

We move from the sea to land, from fairytale countries to Ithaca (again), from Odysseus’ external to his internal nostos,\(^2\) i.e., his reintegration into Ithacan society and his oikos as king, husband, father, and master of the house. Odysseus’ meeting with Athena marks an upward turn in the hero’s fortunes: instead of being persecuted by a god (Poseidon), he will be openly helped by one (Athena); instead of passively enduring his fate, he will actively decide that of others (the Suitors). Even though he still has much to endure, all takes place in the certainty of future revenge.

In the conversation with Athena lines are set out both for the second half of the *Odyssey* as a whole (Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors, to which the pace and manner of the reunions with his philoi are made subservient), and for the next three books (Odysseus’ stay with Eumaeus in 14, Telemachus’ return to Ithaca in 15, and the reunion of father and son at Eumaeus’ place in 16). The encounter with this goddess, in which Odysseus conceals his name and invents a lying tale, is also a ‘rehearsal’ for more serious encounters to follow, when hiding his identity will be a matter of life and death.

1–2 The same reaction as after Odysseus stopped narrating the first

---


3–16 Alcinous’ reaction to Odysseus’ story partly complements and partly repeats the reactions (his own and Arete’s) in the Intermezzo (11.328–84). First, reacting this time not to the truth or quality of Odysseus’ story (cf. 11.363–9), but to its content, the fact that Odysseus, time and again, was blown off course, he reassures him that this time, having come to his house, i.e., being dependent on his care, he will return home without further reversals. He then turns Arete’s suggestion to give extra gifts (11.339–41), which he ‘ratified’ at the time (11.351–2), into a specific injunction to the Phaeacian nobles, who are at the same time assured of compensation.

17–35 The speed of narration increases: the *‘retiring for the night’ type-scene is represented by one element only (the others retire: 17); the *‘sacrifice’ type-scene is abbreviated (the only elements mentioned briefly are: (ii) the killing of the victim: 24–5, (iv) burning of thigh bones: 26a, and (vi) meal: 26b–27a); the content of Demodocus’ song is not indicated (27b–28; cf. 1.153–5); the rest of the day is summarized in a simile (31–5).

18–80 Odysseus’ departure is built around elements of the *‘departure by ship’ type-scene, which is resumed from 8.48–55, but contains many extra features (cf. Telemachus’ departure in 15.56–183n.):

19–22 (vi) Phaeacians bring on board Odysseus’ gifts, which are personally stored by Alcinous.
23–35 ‘farewell’ meal
36–63 ‘farewell’ speeches + libation
64–5 Odysseus is escorted to the ship.
66–72 (vi) Arete sends servants with more gifts and provisions, which are stored.
73–5a A bed is prepared for Odysseus.
75b–76a (vii) Odysseus goes on board and lies down.
76b–77a Rowers take their seats in an orderly fashion.
77b (viii) The moorings are cast off.
78 (ix) The Phaeacians row, (being famous rowers, they will not (xi) turn to sailing, as is customary, but will continue rowing the whole night)
79–80 while their passenger sleeps.
The fact that Alcinous carefully stows the gifts under the rowing-benches, where they will not hamper the rowers, is characteristic of his kind nature and prepares us for a smooth voyage.

A focalized sunset. While in the Homeric epics usually the sun rises and sets without the characters paying any special attention to it, here Odysseus longs for the sun to set (30) and when this finally happens it is ‘joyful’ for him. Cf. II. 8.488, where nightfall is joyful to the Greeks, who are suffering heavy losses in the war; 9.240, where Hector is – allegedly – longing for daybreak; and – perhaps – Od. 14.457–8n.

The primary function of the simile † is ‘advertised’: both farmer and Odysseus feel joy (ἀσπασίως/ἀσπαστῶν) at seeing the sun go down (33 ≈ 35). The exhaustion of the farmer may, by way of secondary function, suggest Odysseus’ weariness, both physical and mental, after ten years of wanderings (cf. 90–1).

Having earlier said goodbye to Euryalus (8.407–16) and Nausicaa (8.457–68), Odysseus now says farewell (χαίρετε: 39, χαίρε: 59) to Alcinous and the Phaeacian nobles (36–46) and Arete (56–62). The scene recalls Odysseus’ first meeting with the Phaeacians in Book 7: Alcinous orders Pontonöus to prepare a libation (49–51a = 7.178–80a; 53–4a = 7.182–3a); Odysseus’ last words to the Phaeacians mirror his first (‘send me home . . . I wish you all the best’ versus ‘I wish you all the best . . . send me home’: 7.148–52); his separate ‘farewell’ toast to Arete recalls his supplication of her (7.142–52); and his crossing the threshold (to leave) in 63 recalls his doing the same to enter in 7.135. The ring-composition † effectuates closure; cf. Introduction to 24.

Odysseus’ *‘farewell’ speeches contain the usual wishes for well-being. For himself he not only wishes for a safe return, but already envisions the situation at home, where he hopes to find his excellent wife and philoi (41–3); the tone is set for the second half of the Odyssey. For his hosts he hopes that they will continue to take pleasure in their wives and children (a mirror of his wish for himself), that the gods will give them ‘all kinds of’ excellence (a reference to Alcinous’ repeated expressions of pride in the athletic and nautical excellence of his people; cf. 8.102–3 and 240–55), and that ‘there may be no communal disaster’ (44–6); for his hostess he hopes that she will take pleasure in her children, her people, and Alcinous (61–2).

His conclusion in 40–1 that he has got what he wanted, ‘an escort and gifts’, shows that he is again master of the situation: in 7.151–2 he humbly
asked for an escort; in 11.355–61 the idea of having both an escort and gifts began to appeal to him, while now he claims that to get both had been his intention from the very beginning. The narratees, recalling Zeus’s words in 5.37–40, may conclude that the Phaeacian episode has fulfilled its divinely planned purpose.

49–62 An instance of the *(collective) libation’ type-scene: (i) proposal for a libation, which also states its purpose (49–52); (iii) preparation (53–4); (iv) libation (54–62; expanded with Odysseus’ ‘farewell’ toast to Arete).

69 The *provisions (cf. again in 72) seem intended for Odysseus and symbolize the good care and respect of the Phaeacians for their honoured guest. In point of fact he will not make use of them during his one-night voyage, which he spends sleeping.

73–92 Odysseus’ sleep during the sea voyage had been anticipated in 7.318–20 and 8.444–5. It symbolizes the absolute reliability of the Phaeacian escort (cf. 7.318–28n.). It may also be part of the secrecy which surrounds the Phaeacian ship: when it sails it is covered by mist (8.562). This is a positive instance of the *sleep’ motif: Odysseus can sleep (contrast his having to stay awake during the seventeen days on the raft: 5.271) without being harmed (contrast his companions opening the bag of winds during his sleep: 10.47–55). His blissful sleep is given no less than three epithets: νήθωμος, ‘sweet’ (79; standard), νῆγρετος, ‘deep’ (80; cf. the Phaeacians’ intentions in 74), and Ἑδιστος, ‘most agreeable’ (80; Ἑδος is a standard epithet, but the superlative is unique). The series of epithets culminates in the comparison of sleep to death (80). Death and sleep are often associated: cf. the brothers Hypnos and Thanatos in II. 14.231 and 16.682; the metaphor ‘he slept a bronze sleep’ in II. 11.241 (and cf. 14.482–3); and Penelope praying in 18.201–5 for gentle death to come just as gentle sleep came to her earlier. Here the comparison suggests how deep Odysseus’ sleep is: he does not move and is completely oblivious to his past sufferings (92). He will continue sleeping even after the ship has landed in Ithaca (cf. 119).

81–92 This is the longest description of a *sea voyage in Homer. The narrator stresses (i) the unfailing course of the Phaeacian ship (86), thus showing Alcinous’ claim in 5–6 to be justified; and (ii) its magical speed, which had been anticipated in 7.36 and 8.561 (cf. the simile of the horses in 81–4n.; ‘sped along’/speeding along’: 86, 88; ‘quickly’: 83, 88; and the *(not) even + hyperbole’ motif in 86–7: ‘even a falcon, fastest of all birds, could not have paced it’).
In this passage the narrator ‘zooms out’, both spatially (describing the movement of the ship in a bird’s-eye view: 81–8), and temporally (recapitulating Odysseus’ twenty years of suffering: 89–92; cf. the recapitulation in II. 13.345–60). Lines 89–90 seem a deliberate recall of the proem: ἄνδρα . . . δς . . . μάλα πολλά πάθ’ ἄλγεα δν κατὰ θυμὸν Ḁν ἄνδρα . . . ὄς μάλα πολλά . . . πάθεν ἄλγεα δν κατὰ θυμὸν (1.1–4). This time, however, the narrator indicates that Odysseus’ suffering in the war and at sea belongs to the past (πρὶν μέν). Thus the verbal echo emphatically signals the transition from his external to his internal homecoming. The narrator also uses this marked place to ‘plug’ his main hero, calling him a man ‘having counsels similar to the gods’; cf. Alcinous ‘knowing his counsels from the gods’ (6.12).

81–4 The primary function of the simile † is to illustrate the heaving of the ship’s stern (ἄειρόμενοι = ἄειρετο). There is also a correspondence between the horses, who are moved along by the strokes of the whip, and the ship, which is moved forward by the oars hitting the sea (cf. 78). Finally, the speed with which the horses accomplish their course corresponds to the ship’s speed (ῥίμφος: 83, 88).

93–124 An instance of the ‘landing’ type-scene; cf. 3.4–67; 9.142–50; 15.495–500; 16.351–60nn.; mere references in 10.87–96, 140–2; 11.20–1; 12.5–6, and 305–7. In its full form the elements are: (i) arrival; (ii) entering the harbour; (iii) furling the sails; (iv) rowing to the anchorage; (v) lowering the anchor-stones; (vi) tying the moorings; (vii) disembarking; (viii) unloading; (ix) drawing the ship on land. Not surprisingly, ‘landing’ scenes mirror *departure by ship’ type-scenes. This particular instance runs as follows: (i) arrival (95); (ii) entrance into harbour (96–113; here expanded with a detailed description of the Phorcys bay); (ix) instead of being drawn on land, the ship runs onto the beach by itself, due to its speed (114–15); (vii) the Phaeacians leave the ship carrying Odysseus, who is still asleep (116–19), and (viii) his gifts (120–4).

93–5 A unique *sunrise marks the day of Odysseus’ return (the hapax φαύντατος, ‘brightest’, perhaps underscoring the festivity of this special day). It is functional in that the moment described (just before dawn, when the morning star rises; cf. II. 23.226–7) allows the Phaeacians to put Odysseus ashore unnoticed.

96–112 This is the longest description of a harbour in the Odyssey; cf.

Recurrent elements in ‘harbour’ descriptions are: jutting headlands, shelter against the elements, fresh water, and trees at its head. The description here starts off with (a variant of) the *‘there is a place X...’ motif, the narrative thread being picked up again in 113 with anaphoric ‘there’. Whereas scenery† in Homer usually is focalized by a character, here this is precluded by the fact that Odysseus is asleep. Phorcys bay is therefore focalized by the narrator, as is clear from the use of the present tense.⁵ His focalization shines through at one point, when he calls the weavings of the nymphs ‘a marvel to behold’ (108), an expression typically used by mortal focalizers (cf. 6.306n.). The scenery description is spatially organized: it moves from the outside of the bay (97–100a), to its inside (100b–101), then to its innermost point, ‘the head’, with the olive-tree and cave (102–4), and finally inside the cave (105–12). This forward movement of the description evokes the movement of the Phaeacian ship, which in 95 ‘started to approach’ (imperfect) the island and in 113 ‘ran on land’ (aorist).

The elaborate description is functional, in that many of its details will recur in the ensuing scenes: harbour, olive tree, and cave will be used by Athena as ‘tokens of recognition’ (346–51); when Odysseus has recognized his home country he will pray to the nymphs of the cave (355–60); the cave will be used to conceal Odysseus’ belongings (363–4, 370); and Odysseus and Athena will deliberate, as they sit near the olive tree (372–3).

When he notes that the Phaeacians enter Phorcys bay ‘having previous knowledge’, the narrator backs up Alcinous’ claim that Phaeacian ships need no helmsmen or rudders, because they ‘know the minds of men and the cities and fields of all men’ (8.557–62). Here the magical knowledge of the ships is transferred to the sailors.

The detail of the Phaeacians putting Odysseus’ possessions out of sight to prevent them from being stolen while he is asleep introduces a recurrent issue in the ensuing scenes: upon awaking Odysseus’ first thought is for his treasures (203–8); fearing that the Phaeacians may have stolen them (215–16), he counts them (217–19); in his supplication speech to ‘the shepherd’ he mentions them (230); his lying tale is built around them (256–86); Athena’s meeting with him is motivated – in part – by them (304–5, 363–4); and their final storage in the cave of the nymphs is recorded explicitly (366–71). The concern displayed by Phaeacians, Odysseus, and

---

Athena alike is a reflection of the importance of these gifts, the acquisition of which formed one of the *raisons d’être* of the Phaeacian episode (cf. 8.389–93n.).

The narrator ascribes the fact that the Phaeacians give Odysseus presents to Athena’s influence (121); the claim will be reiterated by Athena in 304–5. Athena had indeed beautified Odysseus prior to the games (8.17–20), which brought him his first gifts (cf. 8.389–93), but the ascription/claim is quite strong; it seems to be intended to prepare for Athena’s leading role as Odysseus’ helper in the ensuing scene, and elsewhere in the second half of the *Odyssey*.

125–87 This scene, in which Poseidon punishes the Phaeacians for their safe escort home of Odysseus, brings us a somewhat forced combination of (i) another manifestation of *Poseidon’s wrath against Odysseus and (ii) the fulfilment of Nausithous’ prophecy (8.564–71). It consists of two parts: announcement (125–58) and execution (159–87).

The announcement takes place in one of the rare Olympic scenes in the *Odyssey* (cf. 1.26–95n.), one which is of the type in which a god complains to Zeus about the behaviour of humans and asks to punish them; cf. 12.374–90 and *Il*. 7.443–63. The change of scene †, from Ithaca to Olympus, is abrupt. The narrator could have chosen to indicate that Poseidon saw how the Phaeacians deposited the sleeping Odysseus on land (it appears from 134–5 that he has seen this), but instead we find a transition of the type ‘X did not forget’ (125–7), for which cf. *Il*. 1.318–19 and 495–6. Poseidon complains to Zeus that the Phaeacians, his own progeny, no longer honour him. While he had expected Odysseus to come home only after much suffering – he could not rob him of his *nostos*, since Zeus had promised it (a paraphrase of Polyphemus’ curse of 9.530–5) – it now appears that the Phaeacians have brought him home while he was asleep and have given him many gifts (in other words, made – the final phase of – his *nostos* pleasant) (128–38). After Zeus has given him permission to act as he wishes (140–5), Poseidon announces that he wants to smite their ship and cover their city with a mountain (147–52), thereby fulfilling the prophecy of 8.564–71 (149–52 ≈ 8.567–9), to which he does not, however, refer. In this way he intends to end the Phaeacian custom of escorting people home (this is new in comparison to what we heard in Book 8 and provides an important clue as to the function of this somewhat curious scene, see below). Zeus reacts by setting out what he thinks best (152–8). In the first place, he asks Poseidon to petrify the
ship (cf. *Il.* 2.319 and 24.617) instead of smiting it (as he announced, and as is his normal procedure; cf. 5.313ff.). Even in antiquity it was a matter of controversy, whether he also changes the second part of Poseidon’s punishment, the covering of the city: does he in 158 repeat Poseidon’s words in 152 verbatim, or does he replace μέγας by μὴ and asks him not to cover the city (anticipating Alcinous’ prayer of 183)\(^6\) The sequel to the story does not provide an unequivocal answer.

The execution of Poseidon’s plan starts with the god petrifying the ship and rooting it to the bottom and then going off ‘at a distance’ (159–64). This last detail suggests his removal from the scene (and giving up the second part of his plan), but does not prove it, since it could be no more than the corresponding phrase to ‘he came near (sc. the ship)’ in 162. Inspired by Zeus’s remark that Poseidon must petrify the ship while it is within sight of the Phaeacians (155–7), the narrator now turns to them and presents their focalization in the form of an *actual tis*-speech † (165–9): they ask themselves who has fastened the ship at sea. A *narratorial intervention (170), taking the form of the ‘they said A, but did not know how things really were’ motif (22.31–3n.), explicitly marks their lack of understanding and thereby prepares for the contrast with Alcinous, who does understand what is going on. He realizes that this is the fulfilment of (the first part of) Nausithous’ prophecy (172–8), and comes up with a series of measures: to stop conveying people (179–81a; cf. 150–1a) and to sacrifice and pray to Poseidon, in the hope that the latter will not fulfil the second part of his prophecy (181b–183). As is his wont, the narrator faithfully records the execution of Alcinous’ order (the Phaeacians sacrifice), but then, while they are praying, leaves them (in order to return to Ithaca), without recording Poseidon’s reaction. This open end\(^7\) allows the narratees either (i), when they read μὴ in 158, to assume that the Phaeacian prayer will be heard, Poseidon granting Zeus’s request in 158, or (ii), when they read μέγας, to assume that the prayer will not be heard, Poseidon executing the plan which was authorized by Zeus (but at least be spared the description of the covering up of the Phaeacian city). For other open ends, cf. 363–71n.

The scene serves a double function. (i) It emphatically marks the end of *Poseidon’s anger against Odysseus, which was bound to end at the moment of the hero’s return to Ithaca. Now the way is free for Athena to

---

\(^6\) Bassett (1933) and Friedrich (1989).

\(^7\) Peradotto (1990: 77–82).
help Odysseus openly, which she will immediately do. (ii) It explains why, in the time of the narrator and the narratees, no one ever sees the Phaeacians. Thus we are dealing with a negative aition, such as is also found in II. 7.445–64 + 12.9–35 (explanation of why the wall around the Greek camp is no longer visible in the time of the narrator).

125–38 Poseidon’s return to Olympus – the last time we saw the god he was on his way to Aegae (5.381) – has not been recounted by the narrator; a common form of ellipsis † in Homer.

135 In Poseidon’s angry eyes, the Phaeacians have given Odysseus ‘countless’ (ἔσπετα) gifts. Earlier, the same gifts had been called ἀγλαά, ‘splendid’ (at the moment they are promised: 11.357), and φιλα, ‘dear’ (when Odysseus speaks of what are now his possessions: 13.41).

172–8 In the usual Homeric manner, Alcinous repeats – more or less – verbatim Nausithous’ prophecy in 8.564–71, instead of referring back (saying: ‘this is the fulfilment of the prophecy I talked about earlier’); cf. 5.1–42n. For a minor difference and for the ‘recalled prophecy’ motif, cf. 8.564–71n.

185–9 The change of scene †, from Scheria to Ithaca, does not come about by a form of correspondence, but is prepared for by the narrator in the form of an appositive summary †. It takes place within the verse, which is rare; cf. 15.495; 17.182; II. 1.430. It adds to the mysterious effect of the open ending; cf. 125–87n.

The punishment of the Phaeacians must have taken up several hours at least, since the ship had to return home first. But when we turn again to Odysseus it is still early morning (he was put ashore just before dawn: 93–5). Thus – exceptionally – the ‘continuity of time’ principle † has not been observed. This irregular technique is effective, in that it will allow the narratees to note the unfairness of Odysseus’ complaint about the Phaeacians in 200–16n.

187–358 A special instance of the *delayed recognition* story-pattern: Odysseus does not immediately recognize Ithaca, but thinks he has landed in an unknown country (188–221; the generalizing plurals in 195–6, ‘the roads running through, the harbours where all can anchor, and the tall growing trees’ reflect his non-recognition). His failure is due to his long absence (189), but above all to Athena pouring mist around the countryside,

which makes it hazy (189–352n.). We find the following typical elements: (i) the dramatic irony † of Odysseus asking where he is while he is in fact on Ithaca (233–5); (iv) ‘The Ithacan inhabitant’/Athena reveals that this is Ithaca (but does not remove the mist) (237–49); (iii) instead of Athena telling a lying tale about Ithaca, Odysseus tells a lying tale about himself (256–86); and (v) reacts with scepticism to the news that this is Ithaca (324–8); (vi) Athena then points out the bay of Phorcys, cave of the nymphs, olive-tree, and the mountain Neriton (344–51), which thereby function as *‘tokens of recognition’, σήματα, and removes the mist (352); now Odysseus is finally convinced and (vii) kisses the ground (354), which is both a traditional gesture of a traveller returning to his fatherland (cf. 5.462–3n.) and the regular conclusion of a recognition (cf. 16.4–219n.).

The whole situation is fraught with dramatic irony † (cf. esp. 200–2, 221–440, 237–49, 242–7nn.), which sometimes takes the compact form of ‘he was sleeping in/saw/bewailed his fatherland’ (without knowing that it was his fatherland) (188, 197, 219; in the last two passages we are dealing with paralepsis †, the narrator intruding into Odysseus’ focalization); cf. 14.36, 438; 17.201; 19.204–12, and 392nn.. The narrator subtly underscores the dramatic irony through the technique of periphrastic denomination †: instead of ‘Ithaca’ he speaks, poignantly, of ‘his fatherland’ (*γαῖας πατροκλῆι: 188, *πατρίδα γαῖα: 197, 219).

189–352 A – less clear – instance of the *‘mist’ motif. At first sight, lines 189–93 suggest that Athena pours mist around Odysseus, so as to make him invisible, as she did in 7.14–143. From 194–6 (and cf. 352), however, it appears that she in fact pours mist around the Ithacan scenery, so as to make it unrecognizable to Odysseus. The narratorial motivation † is to allow the narrator his favourite story-pattern of delayed recognition: because of the mist Odysseus does not immediately recognize his own country; cf. 187–358n. Athena’s actorial motivation † must be – rather forcefully – extracted from her embedded focalization in 190–3: because of the mist Odysseus does not recognize Ithaca and therefore does not immediately leave for home, which gives her the time to make him unrecognizable and discuss his incognito return with him.

190–3 *Athena’s embedded focalization (shifter: διήθη ἀπόθιτη) informs the narratees about what is to come: 190–1 announce her counselling Odysseus (from 372 onward), and making him ‘unrecognizable’ (in 396–403); 192–3 announce the second half of the poem, Odysseus’ incog-
nito revenge on the Suitors. For her exclusion of Penelope from the revenge scheme, cf. 16.4–219n.

Athena’s focalization triggers character-language †: ὑπερβασίν, ‘transgression’ (except for this place, in speech only, six times); the four Odyssean instances all concern the Suitors or their servants (3.206; 22.64, 168). For the goddess’ condemnation of the Suitors, cf. 1.224–9n.

197 πατρίς, ‘fatherland’, belongs to the character-language †: 114 times in speech, seven times in embedded focalization, and eight times in simple narrator-text.

200–16 Odysseus’ non-recognition of Ithaca triggers a deliberative *monologue: ‘(emotional opening) Woe is me, to what people have I come this time. Will they be insolent and without justice, or hospitable and with godlike mind (200–2)? (first deliberation) Where am I to take my possessions and where have I arrived (203)? (first conclusion) I wish I had stayed with the Phaeacians and found another host and escort home (204–6). (second deliberation) As it is, I do not know where to hide my possessions nor do I want to leave them where they are (207–8). (second conclusion) Woe is me, the Phaeacians have turned out not to be sensible and just in all respects, who promised to bring me to Ithaca, but in fact brought me to another country. May Zeus punish them (209–14). (decision) But I will count my belongings and check whether the Phaeacians took some with them (215–16).’

The function of this monologue is (i) to exploit the dramatic irony † of the fact that Odysseus does not know that he is on Ithaca; (ii) to bring home the wry dramatic irony of Odysseus’ unjustified accusations against the Phaeacians (who have brought him home and taken every care with his possessions: 122–4) and his prayer for their destruction (when they have just been punished: 125–87); and (iii) to call attention to his possessions, which will form a central issue in the upcoming meeting with Athena (cf. 120–4n.).

200–2 This is a question which Odysseus has asked himself in one form or another many times during his travels; cf. 6.119–21n. Its occurrence here, in exactly the same formulation as on Scheria, heightens the dramatic irony †: although in his own land, he behaves as if he has landed in a strange country. At the same time, the question is a signal for the narratees that in the twenty years of his absence Ithaca has become estranged from Odysseus (cf. the hostile reaction of Eumaeus’ dogs in 14.29–36), and that he will have to find out carefully which of its residents are ‘insolent’ (the
S suitors and some of the servants) and which ‘hospitable’ (Eumaeus and Philocteus).

217–19 The execution of his decision in 215–16 tells Odysseus that his negative evaluation of the Phaeacians was wrong as regards his possessions; soon he will learn that in the matter of their escort home he was likewise mistaken. In his ensuing lying tale to Athena he will – indirectly – give them their due; cf. 253–86n.

221–440 The meeting between Athena and Odysseus consists of three movements: first, both god and mortal give practical proof of their cunning by assuming a disguise; then, Athena gives an abstract assessment of Odysseus’ – and her own – exceptional cunning and alertness; and, finally, they join forces intellectually in devising a strategy against the suitors.

This scene, with its repeated and emphatic laudatio of cunning, provides a divine authorization of one of the central themes in the Odyssey: *‘cunning versus force’. Athena also explains her constant support of Odysseus, in both past (Troy) and present (cf. 1.26–95n.). It is not, as in the Iliad, pity or blood ties which move the goddess, but a shared characteristic.10

The meeting is an instance of a *‘god meets mortal’ scene. Athena adopts the disguise of a young shepherd (222–5), but halfway through the conversation assumes the shape of a ‘beautiful and tall woman, who knows splendid works’ (288–9) and reveals her identity (299–300). ἑικτο, ‘she resembled’ (288), suggests that this is still a disguise, but as Athena is the patroness of female handiwork (2.116–17 /H11005 7.110–11; 20.72), this one comes close to her real identity and is therefore conducive to her self-revelation. Her early self-identification is a sign of honour; cf. 16.161, where the narrator notes that the gods do not appear openly to all. Athena will again appear openly to Odysseus (in the same shape) in 16.155–77 and 20.30–57.

The first part of the meeting is a – dramatic ironic – instance of the *‘stranger meets with local inhabitant’ story-pattern: ‘the stranger’ Odysseus meets with ‘a local inhabitant’, who is a ‘son of the rulers’ (223) and who tells him where he is.

Throughout the dialogue the use of deictic pronouns (referring to the Ithacan scenery and Odysseus’ possessions) is conspicuous: τῷδε (228),

---

Athena’s entrance upon the scene is abrupt; cf. 18.1–8n.

The reference to the ‘shepherd’/Athena with ‘her’ (τὴν) is an instance of paralepsis †: the narrator intrudes upon Odysseus’ embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘he saw’), in order to indicate the true identity of the person seen, for the benefit of the narratees, as is his wont in situations of disguise; cf. 1.118n.

Odysseus is glad to see the shepherd (because this allows him to find out where he is) but, taking no risks, approaches him in the form of a *supplication, without the accompanying physical ritual: ‘Friend, since you are the first I meet, (request) greetings and do not encounter me in bad spirit but save me and these things. For I pray to you as to a god and (reference to speech-act of supplication) I approach your knees as a suppliant. (request) But tell me this: which country is this?’

The narratees may note the dramatic irony † of Odysseus (i) shrewdly comparing the youth before him to a god (230–1), as he did with Nausicaa in 6.149–52, while this time his addressee really is a god; and (ii) suggesting that this might be a εὐδείας, ‘bright’ island (234), using an epithet which is always, six times, used of Ithaca.

With obvious relish, Athena plays her role of local and her speech thrives with ambiguity †: she calls Odysseus ‘stranger’ (237 and 248), chides him for not knowing famous Ithaca (237–41), gives a long and encomiastic description of Ithaca (242–7), and says she knows Troy only from hearsay (249: φασίν). The ring ‘you must have come from far’ (237) . . . ‘Troy, which they say is far away’ (249) contains a last ‘in-joke’ for the narratees, who are aware that Athena knows ‘the stranger’ is Odysseus, who has come from Troy. Nonetheless, the goddess’ words are also intended to please Odysseus, since he knows that Ithaca’s fame in Troy (248–9) is his doing; once more (cf. 8.73–82 and 499–520), he is confronted with his own kleos.

This is the third time Ithaca is described in the Odyssey; cf. 4.602–8n. Athena’s version mentions most of the standard elements (Ithaca is rugged, suited not for horses but for goats, is not spacious; the

*‘description by negation’ technique), so as to be convincing to Odysseus. She also adds extra elements (the island has ‘unlimited’ grain, wine, cattle, ‘various’ woods, and ‘ever-flowing’ watering places), which suit her role as proud local. For Odysseus having his own homeland recommended to him, cf. 14.96–104 (Eumaeus gives ‘the stranger’/Odysseus a glowing description of Odysseus’ vast herds); 17.264–8 (‘the stranger’/Odysseus describes the beautiful palace of Odysseus), and 313–17 (Eumaeus describes Odysseus’ fastest dog, Argus, to him).

250–2 For the combination of joy (here) and scepticism (324–8), cf. 23.32–8n.

251 In Ἰανάιη πατρώιη we have an instance of the significant use of the possessive pronoun by the narrator. The possessive pronoun ‘his’/‘her’ is in principle redundant in the (third-person) narrator-text, because the context already makes clear who the possessor is. When the narrator nevertheless uses it, it adds emphasis and in this way creates pathos (here and in 354: Odysseus has finally come back to his own country after visiting so many strange ones; 14.32 and 18.8: Odysseus treated as a stranger in his own palace), or intensifies the dramatic irony † of a situation (19.209: Penelope weeps over her husband, not realizing that he is sitting next to her; 19.392: Euryclea unwittingly washes the feet of her master).

253–86 This is the first in a series of five lying tales told by Odysseus in the Odyssey; cf. 14.192–359 (to Eumaeus; summarized by the latter in 16.61–7 and 17.522–7); 17.415–44 (to Antinous; partly repeated in 18.138–40 and 19.75–80); 19.165–202 + 221–48 + 268–99 (to Penelope), and 24.244–79 + 303–14 (to Laertes); cf. also the Trojan anecdote of 14.468–503 and the lying tale told by an anonymous Aetolian about Odysseus in 14.379–85.12 Sometimes the narratees are explicitly warned about the deceiving nature of Odysseus’ tales, beforehand (13.254–5) or afterwards (19.203). The great number of (lying) tales told by Odysseus contributes to his image as a ‘singer’; cf. 11.363–9n.

Homeritic lying tales are intended to back up a false identity; cf. ‘Mentes’/Athena in 1.179–212 or ‘the Myrmidon’/Hermes in Il.

24.396–401. Each time Odysseus carefully chooses his fictional identity, with an eye to his addressee: speaking to (i) the young, armed shepherd, he takes on the role of a father with children of his own and a military man; (ii) Eumaeus, of the son of a slave woman; (iii) Antinous, of a rich man fallen on hard times; (iv) Penelope, of an aristocrat and grandson of Minos. In three of his tales Odysseus adopts the Cretan personality, since Crete is sufficiently far away to prevent anyone from disproving his story. If at the time of the narrator and his narratees the Cretans already had a reputation as liars, the choice may be an ‘in-joke’; or Odysseus’ lying tales may have helped to create that reputation. It also allows him to associate himself (here negatively, in the other tales positively) with the Cretan king Idomeneus, who ranks among the foremost heroes of the Iliad.\textsuperscript{13} What here is merely an instinctive reaction on the part of Odysseus, who is concerned about the pile of treasures next to him, will soon become a conscious strategy, when he has to back up the identity of the old beggar into which Athena has transformed him.

All Odysseus’ lying tales consist of a mixture of fact and fiction, which enhances their plausibility (cf. 19.203: ‘lies resembling truth’);\textsuperscript{14} indeed, they will be believed by all his addressees except Athena. Even the fictional elements are often only thinly disguised allomorphs of Odysseus’ real adventures. As the moment of disclosure draws closer, his yarns will contain more and more truthful elements; cf. esp. 19.165–299n. In the present instance, the mixture looks as follows: I come from Crete (fiction), I have killed the son of (fiction) Idomeneus (fact), Orsilochus (fiction; the name ‘Stirring ambushes’ is invented with an eye to 268: λοχησόμενος, ‘lying in ambush for’), because he tried to take away the booty which I acquired with much effort in Troy (fiction, but the booty obviously stands for the gifts he got from the Phaeacians). I begged Phoenician sailors to bring me to Pylos or Elis, offering them part of the booty (fiction, but reminiscent of the Phaeacians; note in particular the verb ‘beg’ which recalls Odysseus’ supplication on Scheria). They were driven off course by a storm (fiction, but reminiscent of many of Odysseus’ adventures), against their will and not because they wanted to cheat me (having just heard that he is in Ithaca, Odysseus here retracts his accusation against the Phaeacians of 209–14), and with much effort we rowed into the harbour here (fiction, but close to reality: the

\textsuperscript{13} Haft (1984).  \textsuperscript{14} Aristotle Poetics 1460a and Eustathius ad Iliad 14.199.
'oar-loving' Phaeacians rowed with much power into the harbour). I fell asleep and they took my belongings from board while I slept (fact). They went home and I was left behind sorrowing (fact).

Odysseus’ lying tales make use of recurrent elements; cf. Appendix E. He shrewdly tailors these elements to the situation in which he finds himself and to his addressee. In the present situation he must explain why, though a rich man, he is alone (he is an exile, his escorts have returned home), why he did not know where he was (they were driven off course by a storm and landed in the night), and how he got the riches next to him (he participated in the Trojan war). Above all, he must intimidate the armed young man before him (he used to be leader of his own troops, has children at home, who might avenge an assault on their father, while in the past he has not hesitated to kill a man who tried to take his treasures away from him). The friendliness of the Phoenicians, which differs markedly from their negative portrayal in other tales, is not only the result of the fact that they here stand for the Phaeacians; it also conveys another implicit message: the shepherd should follow their good example and be kind to the stranger (in which case he may expect a reward).

So much for the lying tale’s ‘argument’ function †; but it also has a ‘key’ function †: in an ambush, Odysseus kills someone who tried to take away his belongings, and this anticipates his secret murder plot against the Suitors, soon to be devised by himself and Athena.15

Odysseus starts off his tale smoothly by reacting to ‘the shepherd’s information (‘I have heard of Ithaca even on Crete, which is far away’; the ‘catch-word’ technique †: Odysseus’ θηλοῦ in 257 picks up Athena’s θηλοῦ in 249) and then spiralling back in time via an epic regression †:

E I have come here with my treasures (257–8a),
D fleeing my country (258b–259a),
C after I killed Orsilochus (259b–261),
B because he wanted to rob me of my Trojan booty (262–4),
A because I had fought there on my own account and not with his father (265–6).
C’ I killed him through an ambush (267–71)
D’ and asked Phoenicians to transport me to Pylos or Elis (272–5).
E’ After a storm I was left behind here with my treasures (276–86).

253–5 The narrator explicitly notes that the ensuing tale is not true, and is not what Odysseus would actually like to say (something like ‘I am Odysseus and this is my home-country’, giving expression to the joy he felt in 251). It is a manifestation of his cunning (πολυκέρδεσα νόον is a hapax. It is one of Odysseus’ many poly-epithets; cf. 1.1n.), which will be amply recognized and praised by Athena in 291–9 (where note esp. κέρδολέος, κέρδε’, κέρδεσιν).16


287–310 Athena is the only one to see through Odysseus’ lying tale, but her reaction is one of joy rather than anger (cf. her appreciation of his cautious distrust in 330–2 and Calypso’s endearment in a similar situation: 5.180–91n.); she recognizes a kindred soul.

The structure of Athena’s speech is as follows:

(compliment) Shrewd and wily would have to be the person who could surpass you in tricks, even if it were a god who met you (291–2).
(she uses the *‘(not) even + hyperbole’ motif to pay Odysseus a compliment, but at the same time prepares for the compliment which she will pay herself in 299–300, when it turns out that she did manage to outwit Odysseus).

(playful chiding) Incorrigible, never weary of tricks, so you did not intend to stop your deceiving tales, even when you were at home (293–5).
(she makes clear that she has seen through his lying tale)

(transition) But let us no longer talk about this,
(compliment) because we both know tricks, you surpassing all mortals in intelligence and I all gods (296–9a).

A (playful dig) And yet you did not recognize me (299b–300a),
(she cannot resist the temptation to rub it in that she has in fact outwitted Odysseus)

B (she becomes serious again) who always helps you (300b–301),
C and helped you also amongst the Phaeacians (302).
D This time I have come to devise a scheme with you, to hide your possessions, and to tell you what awaits you in your palace (303–10).

288–9 For Athena’s shedding/change of disguise, cf. 221–440n.


304–5 For Athena’s claim that it was due to her that the Phaeacians gave Odysseus gifts, cf. 120–4n.

306–10 An as yet vague prolepsis † of the rough treatment which awaits Odysseus in his own palace; cf. 17.360–506n. Other characters, too, will foresee violence with apprehension or glee, while the predictions become increasingly specific; cf. 15.327–9; 16.71–2, 85–9; 17.230–2, and 278–9.

Athena’s injunction that Odysseus should tell no one that he has returned gives the narratees a second hint (cf. 190–3) about her plan to have him return incognito, which will be set out in full in 397–403.

312–28 The structure of Odysseus’ answer is as follows:

A’ It is difficult for a mortal who meets you to recognize you, goddess, even if he be very intelligent (312–13).

(‘catch-word’ technique †: Odysseus answers Athena’s ‘(even) if + hyperbole’ motif with one of his own)

B’ I know you always assisted me in Troy, but as we were going home I never saw you. I wandered long until the gods released me (314–21).

C’ Only when I was with the Phaeacians did you encourage me, and you yourself led me through the city (322–3).

E But I beg you, is this really Ithaca (324–8)?

Instead of reacting to D (suggestions for action), Odysseus introduces a new issue (E), reverting to Athena’s words in 237–49. Only when points B and E have been cleared up (which happens in 330–51), will the question of how to proceed be taken up again (363ff.).18

312–13 While Athena in 291–5 reacted with good cheer when Odysseus tried to fool her, our hero is clearly annoyed when he finds out she has fooled him too, and he comes up with an excuse for himself: it is difficult to

18 Besslich (1966: 120–3).
recognize her, since she can assume all kind of shapes. Odysseus’ excuse is backed up by practice; gods in disguise are only seldom spontaneously recognized (one of the rare cases is *II. 3.383–440*, where Helen recognizes Aphrodite). When in *II. 13.72* Ajax claims that gods are ‘easily recognizable’, this is an exaggeration based on his own ‘easy recognition’ (72) of ‘Calchas’/Poseidon, and also part of the exhortative rhetoric of his speech. Indeed, when they so wish, gods can even act invisibly (10.573–4 and 19.33–43) or appear only to one person (16.155–77: Athena is seen by Odysseus and the dogs, not by Telemachus; *II. 1.197–200*: Athena is seen by Achilles, but not by the other Greeks).

314–15 For Athena’s support of Odysseus during the Trojan War, cf. 1.26–95n.

316–21 Odysseus had earlier complained of Athena’s lack of help during his wanderings in a prayer to the goddess (6.325–6). Taking his cue from the goddess’ claim of permanent assistance (300–1) he seizes this opportunity to raise the issue again, now in a direct confrontation with her.

322–3 Odysseus refers back to 7.14–81, when Athena, disguised as a young girl, led him to Alcinous’ palace and encouraged him (cf. esp. 7.50–2). At the time Odysseus did not recognize her, but it is not inconceivable that, in retrospect, he infers a divine motivation; cf. 7.263.

324–8 The distrust displayed here by *Odysseus is both part of his character (cf. Athena’s reaction: ‘you always have this mentality’) and an instance of the typical scepticism of the *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern. For the particular form of his scepticism (he fears that Athena might ‘beguile’ him, i.e., telling him something which he wants to hear, viz. that he is on Ithaca, but which is not true), cf. Telemachus in 16.194–5.

328 For this type of sceptical εἷ + ἐπὶ ν + indicative, cf. 23.36n.

330–51 Athena’s answer has the following structure:

*(compliment)* You are always cautious, alert, and composed. That is why I cannot leave you. Another man would gladly have rushed home, but you first want to test your wife (330–8).

B” I always knew you would come back, (but I could not help you) because I did not want to fight with Poseidon, who is angry at you because of Polyphemus (339–43).

(her excuse is backed up by the narrator; cf. 6.323–31n.)

E’ But I will point out some Ithacan landmarks to you (344–51).
333–8 These lines do not fit in smoothly, in that Odysseus’ self-control involved Ithaca, not his wife. The goddess here seems to be ascribing to Odysseus thoughts which are in fact her own; in 190–3 the narratees had already heard that she did not want Odysseus to reveal himself to his wife and in 397–403 she will say so to Odysseus himself.

The behaviour of ‘another man’ recalls Agamemnon (cf. 11.430–2) and thereby prepares for 383–5.


The repeated use of this motif in the second half of the poem turns Odysseus’ return into a kind of theoxeny: a god in disguise visits mortals and tests their moral standards and hospitality. Some, usually the poor and humble, treat him well and are rewarded; others, usually the rich and powerful, treat him badly and are punished. Cf. 16.177–85, where Telemachus mistakes Odysseus for a god; 17.481–7, where the Suitors consider the possibility that the ‘stranger’/Odysseus is precisely such a *theoxenos*; and 23.62–8, where Penelope refuses to believe that Odysseus has killed the Suitors and claims it must have been a god.

342–3 For Poseidon’s wrath, cf. 1.19–21n.

346–51 Athena’s description of the Ithacan scenery mirrors in part that of the narrator (345–6 = 96 and 102, 347–8 = 103–4), adds the detail of the mountain Neriton, a landmark which Odysseus himself had singled out in his description of Ithaca to Alcinous (9.21–22), and replaces the physical description of the cave of the nymphs (103–12) by a reminder of how Odysseus used to sacrifice there, i.e., by an appeal to his personal

---

experience (349–50), thus optimizing the use of the scenery as ‘token of recognition’.

354 For the significance of Odysseus kissing the ground, cf. 187–358n.

355–65 Inspired by Athena’s reference to the nymphs (347–50), Odysseus gives expression to his joy in a prayer to the nymphs, which is in fact a combination of a *‘prayer’* type-scene and a *‘welcome’* speech (cf. χαίρετε in 358): (i) speech-introduction with verb of praying and praying gesture (355); (ii) invocation of the gods (356a); greeting (356b–358a; for ‘I had never expected to see you again’, cf. 16.23–4 = 17.41–2); (iii) claim to favour on the basis of past and future services (358b); (iv) request, which here takes the form of a wish: ‘if Athena will grant me to live and my son to grow’ (359–60; a first casual reference to Telemachus, who will become central in 412ff.); (v) instead of an ordinary capping formula stating that the nymphs ‘heard him’, it is Athena (who was indirectly addressed by Odysseus in 359–60) who reacts with a speech, in which she pledges her help (361–5; her encouraging words form the transition to the next scene).

363–71 Odysseus’ possessions are finally safely stored; cf. 120–4n. The *Odyssey* never records that Odysseus comes back to collect them, although they are not forgotten by him: they figure in his lying tales (14.323–6 = 19.293–5) and he mentions them to Telemachus (16.230–2) and Penelope (23.341). We are dealing with an open end, which the narratees may fill in by assuming that Odysseus, after everything has ended well for him, will leave the treasures in the cave as ‘the gifts’ (rather than hecatombs: 350) which he promised the nymphs in 358 in exchange for a happy end. The *Odyssey* contains a number of open ends; cf. 125–87 (the fate of the Phaeacians), 15.193–221 (Nestor’s reaction to Telemachus’ surreptitious departure), and 20.371–2nn. (fate of Theoclymenus).

372–439 After two announcements (303–10, 365), the brainstorming about the Suitors finally takes place. The scene is marked off by ring-composition: φραζέσθην (373) ... βουλέυσαντε (439).

In the first half of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus’ revenge was often announced, but its exact form, whether through a trick or in an open fight, was left open (cf. 1.113–18n.). From now on the narratees will be gradually informed on this point, the dénouement coming as a real surprise; a sustained and spectacular instance of paralipsis †, or gradual revelation.21 In the present

---

scene we hear about an incognito return to the palace (397–403) and an open fight with the Suitors (387–96 and 427–8; 395 in particular calls to mind bloody killings by spears in the *Iliad*: 11.95–8; 16.345–50; 17.293–300). The incognito return is set into motion from 429ff. onwards, when Athena changes Odysseus into an old beggar. In 16.235–321 Odysseus repeats to Telemachus the scheme of his incognito return, but also begins preparations for a fight, announcing that at some stage he will ask him to remove the arms from the *megaron* (this will happen in 19.1–50) and discussing helpers. In 18.155–6 the prolepsis of Amphinomus’ death by Telemachus’ spear, and in 18.366–86 ‘the stranger’/Odysseus’ series of hypothetical contests with Eurymachus again suggest a fight. The revenge scheme takes an unexpected course in 19.570–81, when Penelope announces to ‘the stranger’/Odysseus that she will hold a bow-contest with Odysseus’ bow. Though Odysseus reacts positively to this plan, there is no indication that it is at this point that he conceives the idea of using his bow against the Suitors. On the contrary, in 20.30–57 we have a sleepless Odysseus, who is worrying about the upcoming confrontation with the Suitors; and when comforting him Athena never mentions the bow as a potential weapon of revenge. In 20.237 Philoetius offers his assistance, and in 385–6 we are told that Telemachus is waiting for a signal from his father to attack the Suitors; both passages still suggest a regular fight. Not until 21.4 does Athena’s embedded focalization reveal for the first time the connection between the bow-contest and killing of the Suitors, the revelation coming as a – pleasant – surprise to the narratees. Although he is not instructed by Athena, from now on Odysseus acts in such a way as to suggest that he knows he must use the bow to take his revenge (stopping Telemachus, when the latter is about to string the bow, which would mean the end of the contest: 21.128–9, and ‘cunningly’ asking the Suitors to let him participate in the contest: 21.274–84). It is with the bow that Odysseus strikes a first, forceful blow against the Suitors (22.8–118). He then kills the rest in a regular battle (22.119–389). Thus we may conclude that in fact Odysseus’ revenge involves both trick (disguise, bow) and open fight. Trickery being the most sustained and important of the two, Odysseus’ revenge is an instance of the Odyssean *‘cunning versus force’* theme: Odysseus outwits a multitude of strong young men.

As the moment of Odysseus’ bloody revenge draws near, the prolepses † of the Suitors’ death will multiply: there are (i) narratorial prolepses
(18.155–6; 20.392–4; 21.96–100, 417–18); (ii) omens (20.103–4, 345–57; 21.413–15) and ominous words (20.105–21); (iii) prophecies (20.367–70) and announcements by Athena (13.393–6, 427–8 = 15.31–2); and (iv) secular anticipations, such as wishes, prayers, dreams, and curses (15.524; 16.280; 17.494, 496–7, 597; 18.149–50, 235–42; 19.496, 536–53; 20.169–71, 233–4). Whereas in the *Iliad* prolepses of a hero’s death usually cast a tragic light on the sequel and evoke our pity, in the case of the Suitors the mood is grim and the fulfilment of the prolepses is impatiently awaited by the narratees.

372 In Homer the dual often is no more than a metrical convenience. At times, however, a **significant use of the dual** is defendable; thus here and in 439 it underlines the intimacy and closeness of the two ‘conspirators’ Odysseus and Athena (whose affinity had just been stressed: 296–9). Other instances: 16.169–70; 21.152–74; 22.378–80; and 23.300–1.

373 The negative qualification of the Suitors as ‘overbearing’ *ὑπερφιάλωσιν* reflects Odysseus’ and Athena’s embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘they devised’).

376–81 Athena asks Odysseus what he intends to do about the Suitors, who are lording it over his palace, wooing his wife, and offering bride-gifts (this last detail is in fact incorrect; cf. 18.274–80). Odysseus will gradually hear more about the Suitors: their ambush of Telemachus (from Athena: 425–6 and Eumaeus: 14.174–82); their steady consumption of his cattle (from Eumaeus: 14.81–95; 15.328–34); and their provenance and exact number (from Telemachus: 16.122–8 and 245–53). The narratees already know about all this from the first four books, except for the exact number of the Suitors; this – daunting – piece of new information will therefore be as unpleasant to them as to Odysseus himself.

383–91 Scholars have been surprised by Odysseus’ reaction, which seems to imply that he is hearing about the Suitors for the first time (‘if not for your warning, I would have been killed in my palace [by the Suitors] like Agamemnon’), whereas in fact Tiresias had already told him about them and predicted his revenge on them in 11.115–18. Unless one resorts to an Analytical explanation (viz. that Book 11 is a later interpolation), Odysseus’ words are best understood as part of the rhetorical make-up of his whole speech. He takes up a position of dependence *vis-à-vis* the goddess: the πολύμητις leaves it to her to weave a *metis* (386, picking up 303) and asks for

---

22 Chantraine (1953: 25–6).
her support (387–91), expressing his enthusiasm in the form of an *(not) even + hyperbole* motif (*I would fight even with three hundred men, if you would assist me*). In this context his claim, in the pathetic form of an ‘if not’ situation †, that he would have been killed by the Suitors if not for her warning is entirely appropriate. One could compare 15.347–50, where Odysseus will ask Eumaeus whether his parents are still alive, though he has already met his mother in the Underworld; there the question forms part of his playing the role of a stranger.

387–91 The structure of Odysseus’ argument recalls Nestor’s words in 3.218–24:

**Odysseus: Athena**

Stand beside me,
the way you did in Troy.
If you stood by me,
I would fight even against
300 men.

**Nestor: Telemachus**

If Athena loved you,
the way she loved Odysseus in Troy.
If she loved and cared for you in like manner,
the Suitors would forget about marriage.

383–5 By now the *‘Oresteia’* story has so often been induced as a foil to the *Odyssey* that even the briefest allusion will suffice.

388 When he claims that they (i.e., Athena and Odysseus) destroyed Troy, Odysseus is referring to the trick of the *Wooden Horse,* which is presented as the joint invention of Odysseus and Athena (cf. 8.493–4).

392–415 Athena reacts to Odysseus’ two requests of 386–91 (A: weave a trick, and B: support me when the moment of battle is there) in reverse order †, whereby the last part of her speech evolves into a *(‘table of contents’* speech:

393–6 **B’**

I will stand by you

(*catch-word’ technique †: παρέσσομαι picks up παρασταίης in 389)

397–415 **A’**

I will make you unrecognizable.

You go to Eumaeus and stay there (announcement of Book 14),
while I go to Sparta to summon Telemachus (Book 15).

393–6 Athena will indeed support Odysseus during the *mnesterophonia* (cf. 22.205–40). The function of the bloodthirstiness which she displays here (and cf. 427–8) is to legitimize Odysseus’ ruthless revenge; cf. 1.224–9n.
Athena’s trick, *metis*, consists of changing Odysseus’ appearance so that he will not be recognized by the Suitors, his wife, or his son (or other *philoi* and citizens: 190–3) until the right moment has come to take revenge.\(^{23}\) After all, Odysseus has to defeat a large group of young men. His incognito return has been prophesied by Halitherses (2.175). Naturally, Odysseus has to hide his identity from his enemies, the Suitors, but why does he not reveal himself to his *philoi*? They might – unintentionally – betray his secret and thereby ruin the right moment for revenge (cf. his forceful reaction when he is recognized against his will by Euryclea: 19.479–90). His incognito status also allows him to test his *philoi*; cf. 335–8n. Odysseus will reveal his true identity in a careful order; cf. 16.4–219n.

Athena’s series of instructions typically take the form of imperatival infinitives (404: *efisafik°syai*, 411: *m°nein, §jer°esyai*); cf. 10.505–40n.

Prior to his first appearance in the *Odyssey*, *Eumaeus* is given a ‘plug’.

A brief reference to scenery †, typically made by a character and when the story needs it: Athena gives Odysseus clues as to where to find the swineherd (cf. 14.2–3), and the ‘Raven’s rock’ will play a role in 14.532–3, when Eumaeus sleeps there with his swine.

Again (cf. 312–19), Odysseus does not simply accept the goddess’ words, but – somewhat bitterly – reacts to them: why did she send Telemachus on this dangerous (note *étrÊgetow*) trip, which will make him suffer hardships, too (like himself)? For Telemachus’ trip as a mini-odyssey, cf. Introduction to 1.

Athena reassures Odysseus by briefly referring to her own role as Telemachus’ escort (cf. 2.267–97n.), revealing her intention that his son should win *kleos* (cf. 1.94–5n.), and painting a picture of his present situation, sitting quietly in Menelaus’ palace. She takes this opportunity to inform him about the Suitors’ ambush (which she expects to further fuel his feelings of revenge against the Suitors), immediately assuring him that it will remain without effect.

Athena’s references also serve to remind the narratees of the ‘Telemachus’ storyline (cf. 4.620–7n.), the Suitors (cf. 4.847n.), and their ambush (cf. 4.658–74n.).

For the function of Athena’s bloodthirstiness, cf. 393–6n.

\(^{23}\) Bowra (1952: 194–7).
429–38 As is his wont, the narrator carefully records the execution of Athena’s announcement in 397–403; his version is more detailed than the goddess’ instructions:

| 430–1a | flesh and hair | ≈ 398–9 |
| 431b–432 | skin | New element |
| 433 | eyes | ≈ 401 |
| 434–7a | clothing | Cf. 399–400 |
| 437b–438 | stick and pouch | New elements |

**Odysseus’ disguise** will be removed by Athena in 16.172–6 (prior to the recognition scene with Telemachus); renewed in 16.454–9 (prior to Eumaeus’ return); partly removed in 18.67–70 (before the boxing contest with Irus); maintained by Odysseus in 22.486–91 (when he declines a suggestion to change his clothes, thus complicating Penelope’s recognition of him: 23.95, 115, 116); and definitively shed in 23.153–65 (when after a bath he puts on beautiful clothing and Athena beautifies him). The narratees are reminded of the disguise in 17.202–3 and 337–8.

Odysseus’ disguise completely convinces the Suitors and the bad servants, who treat him contemptuously (cf. Introduction to 17). More sympathetic characters, however, recognize his kingly features (Philoctetes in 20.194), force (Penelope in 21.334), or even his resemblance to Odysseus (Euryclea in 19.380–1). Odysseus backs up his false identity by *lying tales and plays his role like an accomplished actor (cf. 17.1–25n.). At times his true identity is discernible in the assertive manner in which he speaks; cf. 14.158–64; 16.90–111; 17.467–76; 18.23–4, 313–19, 366–86; 19.582–7; 20.233–4nn. Rather than betraying a lack of consistency, as some scholars have maintained,24 these passages add to the suspense.25 The narratees may also note that often what is said about ‘the stranger’ (by himself or others) also suits Odysseus; cf. 14.120; 15.343–5, 485–92; 16.61–6; 17.284–5, 509–11nn. Finally, they may enjoy the way in which ‘the beggar’/Odysseus pays Odysseus compliments; cf. 14.468–503; 19.240, 267, 285–6; and 24.267–8.

The particular disguise given to Odysseus is not without symbolism: his age and poverty contrast with the youth and luxurious lifestyle of the

---

Suitors; in his lying tale in 17.415–44 he will use his own fictional fate, his
reversal of fortune, as a warning paradigm. Odysseus has played the role of
beggar before (in Troy); cf. 4.244–6.

When Athena gives Odysseus rags and a worn deer-hide, this is a special
variant of the motif of ‘women providing Odysseus with clothes’; cf. 5.263–8n.

429 For Athena’s use of a magic wand to change Odysseus’ appearance,
cf. 10.234–43n.

439–40 The execution of 404–15 (‘you go to Eumaeus and I will go to
Sparta’) seems to take place in reverse order †: Athena sets out for Sparta. In
14.1ff., however, the narrator immediately turns to Odysseus, only to return
to the goddess (and her trip to Sparta) in 15.1ff.
Book 14 contains the remainder of the thirty-fifth day and the evening; cf. Appendix A. It begins the account of Odysseus’ meeting with Eumaeus, which will be continued in Book 15. The plot function of this stay was indicated by Athena in 13.411–13: Odysseus is to question the swineherd about ‘everything’, i.e., the situation in the palace, and wait there until the arrival of Telemachus. But, as will be clear from its length, the meeting between ‘the stranger’ and the swineherd brings much more. Apart from thematic and structural functions (see below), the main function of the Eumaeus episode is to create a foil for the ensuing encounter between Odysseus and the Suitors and disloyal servants: here we have an Ithacan who all these years has remained loyal to Odysseus and who treats ‘the beggar’ well.

Odysseus’ meeting with Eumaeus is an instance of the *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern: Odysseus does not reveal his true identity until Book 21. He has been instructed by Athena to remain incognito; cf. 13.397–403n. A hint as to why Odysseus keeps his identity hidden from his swineherd for so long, despite the latter’s obvious loyalty, is given in 16.458–9 (he might not be able to keep the good news of Odysseus’ return to himself and tell Penelope). We find the following elements: (i) Eumaeus spontaneously starts talking about ‘absent’ Odysseus in the presence of Odysseus himself (37–47); (ii) he is tested by Odysseus (459–522; 15.304–46; and 21.191–205); (iii) Odysseus tells him two lying tales (192–359 and 468–503); and (iv–vii) finally reveals himself (21.188–244). The meeting with his loyal servant offers Odysseus a chance to rehearse his role as beggar. The narratees may enjoy the many instances of dramatic irony (cf. 36, 37–47, 96–108, 144–7, 174–84, 415, 438nn.).

Odysseus’ incognito conversation with Eumaeus forms an anticipatory
doublet † of his conversation with Penelope in Book 19:¹ in both cases he sits unrecognized before his servant/wife, who talk about him in warm and loving, but at the same time deeply pessimistic terms. On several occasions, and with increasing precision, ‘the stranger’ announces the return of Odysseus, but he meets with passionate disbelief. At the same time, the intimacy between the swineherd/queen and ‘the beggar’ increases, not least as a result of the latter’s information about himself, so that in the end they treat him almost as they would have treated Odysseus. The progression of Eumaeus’ feelings is marked by the vocatives he uses: he starts out addressing Odysseus as ‘stranger’ (56, 80) or ‘old man’ (37, 122, 131, 166, 185), then turns to ‘wretched stranger’ (361) and ‘old man of many sorrows’ (386), and ends with ‘amazing (δαιμονία) stranger’ (443).²

The characterization † of Eumaeus is exceptionally explicit and complete; there are narratorial characterizations (3–4, 421, 433; and 15.556–7) and actorial ones (Athena in 13.404–6 and 15.39); and he recounts his ‘autobiography’ in 15.403–84. His main characteristic is his loving devotion to Odysseus, Telemachus, and Penelope: he longs for Odysseus’ return (passim) and takes good care of his swine during his absence (5–28, 524–33), worries about Telemachus (174–84), is as pleased as a father when the boy returns (16.12–24), repeatedly functions as a confidential messenger between different members of the family (16.130–55, 333–41; 17.507–90), is in tears when he delivers the bow for the contest (21.80–2), and supports Odysseus in the fight against the Suitors (Book 22 passim). He is one of the ‘good’ servants; cf. 1.428–35n. He is also a paradigm of moral rectitude: hospitable (see below), pious (cf. 56–8, 388–9, 420–1, 435–6), and a stern critic of the Suitors (81–95; 15.328–9). The behaviour of Eumaeus is highly pleasing to Odysseus (51–4, 113, 440–1, 526–7; 15.341–2).

The structure of this book is determined largely by the *'(overnight) visit’ type-scene:³ Odysseus (i) sets off (1–4); (iii) finds Eumaeus (5–28; expanded with a description of the swineherd’s yard); (iv) is received by him (29–71); (v) is given a meal (doubled: 72–111 + 410–54); (vi) converses with his host (111–409); and (viii) is given a bed (454–533). The humble circumstances of the swineherd lead to certain modifications, which at the same time are compensated for by his kindness and personal care: the typical element of

(vii) the bath is lacking and Eumaeus must leave the offering of (ix) a guest-gift and (x) an escort to his young master Telemachus (512–17, 15.337–9); he provides a goatskin from his own bed as an improvised seat (49–51) and skins of sheep and goats and his own cloak as bedding (518–22); wine is mixed in a wooden bowl (78; 16.52) instead of a metal vessel; he offers his guest his own cup to drink from (112); there is only one servant (449) and Eumaeus himself performs almost all the duties involved in entertaining a guest. Cf. also 16.1–153n.

This is one of the conversation books of the *Odyssey* (cf. Introduction to 19): there are seventeen speeches, which together take up 409 lines out of a total of 533, and are spoken in an intimate atmosphere. Although Eumaeus talks almost continuously about Odysseus, he refrains from using his name until 144, instead referring to him as ὅ (61, 96, 133, 137), *κεῖνος* (42, 70, 90, 122), and ἀνάξιος (cf. 36n.); an instance of the *‘suppression of Odysseus’ name’* motif. Eumaeus is the only one to reflect on his reticence; cf. 144–7n.

1–4 The change of scene †, from the harbour to Eumaeus’ hut, is accomplished by following in the footsteps of Odysseus.

2–3 An internal analepsis † of 13.407–10, where Athena told Odysseus where to find the swineherd.

5–28 The situation found is focalized by the arriving character (cf. 5.63–75n.): Odysseus sees Eumaeus sitting on his porch (5–7) making sandals (23–4). The narrator, intruding upon his focalization (paralepsis: †), adds information which Odysseus cannot see or know: a full description of Eumaeus’ yard, including its interior and the history of how it was built (7–22), habitual actions (note ‘always’ in 19, 21 and the iterative μινύθεσκον in 17), and the whereabouts of the other herdsmen (24–8).

The scene has a characterizing function; cf. 1.106–12n.: the narratees are told of *Eumaeus’* devoted husbandry of the livestock of his absent master, his loyalty (he sends pigs to the Suitors ‘under force of circumstances’: 27; cf. Phemius in 1.154), and his humble circumstances (he is busy cutting his own sandals). It also has a preparatory function, mentioning twice the voracious Suitors (17–19 and 26–8), who will be the subject of one of Eumaeus’ speeches (80–108), and the dogs (21–2), who will render the opening of the meeting so spectacular. In 524–33 we will also hear how Eumaeus sleeps outside with the male pigs.

---

4 Müller (1968: 93–6) and Austin (1975: 165–8).
7–22 The description † of Eumaeus’ yard combines the methods of scenery description and object description: it starts off with a piece of static description (5–7a), then turns to the general history of the yard (Eumaeus built it himself: 7b–10), and then proceeds with a detailed, spatially organized history (he first built an outer wall: 11–12, and then made pens inside: 13–16a). For a comparison with Polyphemus’ cave, cf. 9.182–92 and 219–23nn.

17–19 The detail that the Suitors settle for nothing but ‘the best’ of Odysseus’ livestock (cf. 106, 108, 17.213 = 20.174, and 20.163) increases the gravity of this one of their *crimes.

24–8 For the narrator conveniently emptying the stage, cf. 24.222–5n.

27 The epithet *ὑπερφίλως, ‘overbearing’, reflects either the focalization of the – intruding – narrator (cf. 5–28n.) or the implicit focalization of Eumaeus (as subject of the action described: ‘he had sent the fourth herdsman to the city, in order to . . .’).

29–71 Odysseus’ *reception takes an unusual course: (b) instead of being seen by his host, he is seen by Eumaeus’ watchdogs, who attack him (29–30a). (a) While Odysseus sits down at the threshold, rather than standing (30b–31), (c) his host hurries towards him (his haste being practical rather than, as usual, ceremonial) and drives the dogs away, by throwing stones at them (32–6), which prevents him from (d) taking the stranger’s hand. His (e) words of welcome almost immediately turn from the situation at hand to his absent master (37–47). He then (f) leads the stranger inside (48) and (g) offers him a seat (49–51). His kind hospitality, extended in humble circumstances, elicits a speech from the stranger (52–4). In his reaction Eumaeus again touches on the sad fate of his master (55–71). Thus Eumaeus’ longing for his absent master is introduced even before the after-dinner conversation.

For a comparison with Telemachus’ arrival at Eumaeus’ yard, cf. 16.4–48n.

29–36 An instance of the *‘watchdog’ motif. Whereas Circe’s watchdogs are wild animals behaving like domestic dogs (10.212–19), Eumaeus’ domestic dogs ‘resemble wild animals’ (21), a circumstance which adds to the danger facing Odysseus. Their aggressive behaviour (i) defines Odysseus’ status upon his return: he is regarded as a stranger (contrast their friendly fawning at the young master Telemachus: 16.4–48n.); (ii) prefigures the rough treatment he is to suffer at the hands of the Suitors and
some of his servants, who on several occasions are called ‘dogs’ (18.328; 19.21, 154; 22.35); (iii) triggers an instance of Odysseus’ proverbial cunning (κερδοσύνη), when he takes up a submissive posture, sitting down and dropping his stick; (iv) allows Eumaeus to give immediate proof of his ‘good’ nature, by chasing the dogs away and apologizing for their behaviour.

32–4 An ‘if not’-situation † heightens the tension. In accordance with the pathos of the moment, the narrator uses character-language †: ἄεικέλιος, ‘disgraceful’ (ten times in direct speech, once in embedded focalization: 24.228, twice in simple narrator-text), and inserts a *significant possessive pronoun: ‘Odysseus had almost suffered a disgraceful pain at his own door-post’.

36 For the dramatic irony † of ‘he addressed his master’ (without knowing that it was his master), cf. 13.187–358n. It alerts the narratees to the dramatic irony of the ensuing speech.

The periphrastic denomination † δοξαζ, ‘master’, for Odysseus is typically used in connection with Eumaeus: in a speech by him (40, 67, 170, 366) or addressed to him (395, 398), in his embedded focalization (8, 450; 15.557; 17.255), or – ironically – by the narrator (here, 438; and 17.201).

37–120 In three successive speeches Eumaeus will talk to ‘the stranger’/Odysseus about topics which are of the utmost importance to the latter, viz. the Suitors and Odysseus, but not until the third time does Odysseus react; cf. 109–10 and 115–20nn.5

37–47 Eumaeus’ *‘welcome’ speech is longer than usual and fraught with dramatic irony †, the servant talking about his ‘absent’ master in the presence of that master (the irony typically belonging to the ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern; cf. 4.104–12n.). It displays the free string form †, the points following each other by association:

A (excuse) My dogs had almost killed you, which would have shed disgrace on me (37–8).

(Eumaeus looks at the incident from his point of view; in 32 the narrator, saying that Odysseus almost suffered ‘disgraceful’ pain, viewed it from Odysseus’ standpoint)

B (transition) The gods already gave me enough other sorrows (39):

C for I sit here grieving over my master and raise pigs for others to eat

5 Besslich (1966: 79–81).
(ἔδεμαν), while he, longing for food (ἐδῶδης), is presumably now wandering amongst strangers (40–4).

D (typical elements of welcome speech:) But come inside, let us eat and then tell me where you are from and the sorrows which you have suffered (45–7).


42–4 Like Telemachus and Penelope (cf. 1.158–68n.), Eumaeus wavers as to whether Odysseus is alive or dead: here he mentions both possibilities; in 68, 133–7, 167, 365–71 he declares that Odysseus is dead; in 171–3 and 423–4 he hopes/prays for his return.

51–2 Part of Odysseus’ speech is prefigured in embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘he was pleased’): ὅτι μῖν ὃς ὑπέδεκτο ὅτι με πρόφρων ὑπεδέξο. For this device, cf. 1.29–31n.; here the repetition emphasizes the positive evaluation of Eumaeus’ hospitality.

53–4 Odysseus’ benediction is an instance of ambiguity †: as the narratees realize, he knows that in fact the herdsman already has been given what he wants by Zeus, the return of his master; cf. 17.354–5 and 18.112–13nn.

55 This is one of the few places where the Homeric narrator drops the third-person mode and, turning to the second-person one, addresses one of his characters (apostrophe). Whereas in the Iliad several characters are apostrophized, this happens in the Odyssey only in the case of Eumaeus: cf. 165, 360, 442, 507; 16.60, 135, 464; 17.272, 311, 380, 512, 579; and 22.194. Scholars are divided as to whether the apostrophe is merely a technical device to accommodate names with a difficult metrical shape, or is a narratively significant device designed to focus on or sympathize with characters.6 The apostrophes of Eumaeus always form part of speech-introductions and it would be forced to claim a special effect in all cases. Taken together, however, these passages do reveal the sympathy of the narrator for this gentle character. Only the narrator, Odysseus, Telemachus, and Penelope address the swineherd by name; the Suitors refer to him as ‘swineherd’.

56–71 Eumaeus’ speech combines the free string form † and ring-composition †:

A It is only my religious duty to help (56–8a).
B But my gift can only be small (58b–59a).
C For such is the way of servants, who always fear new masters (59b–61a).
D Of him [my old master] the gods have prevented the return (61b),
E who would have loved me and given me possessions (62),
F such as a well-disposed master gives to a servant, viz. a house, fields, and a wife, (a servant) who works hard and for whom the gods makes his work prosper (63–5),
F’ just as for me my work here prospers (66).
(τόδε suggests a gesture)
E’ Therefore my master would have given me much benefit, if he had grown old here (67).
D’ But he died (68a).
G If only the whole race of Helen had died, because she caused the death of many. For he [my master] too went to Troy to defend Agamemnon’s honour (68b–71).
(they typically refer to Odysseus with *κεῖνος)

56–8 Eumaeus’ dutiful acceptance of the burden of taking up strangers/beggars recalls Nausicaa in 6.207–8 and contrasts with Melanthius’ (17.217–32) and Antinous’ (17.375–9) harsh rejection.

61–8 Eumaeus displays the typical see-sawing of Odysseus’ philoi, between wish (Odysseus taking care of his loyal servant) and resignation (Odysseus being dead); cf. 1.158–68n. The narratees know that in fact his ‘unattainable’ wish will come true, whereas what he considers a sad reality is not true in fact.

Here and in 138–47 Eumaeus emphatically plugs Odysseus as a gentle master; for the significance of this part of the main hero’s characterization, cf. 2.229–34n.

68–71 Whereas most Homeric characters are forgiving towards *Helen, Eumaeus is bitter; it is she who robbed him of his beloved master.

72–111 The meal forms part of a – highly abbreviated – *‘sacrifice’ type-scene, which in 413–38 will be followed by a more elaborate one: (ii) killing of the victims (72–4); (v) preparation of meat for meal (75); and (vi) the meal (76–111). The standard elements are adapted so as to suggest Eumaeus’ simple circumstances: Eumaeus himself performs the chores of sacrifice
and hence has to gird his tunic (72: a unique detail); he offers his guest the
meat while it is hot and still on the spits (a more primitive way of eating?);
instead of bread there is porridge (or flour sprinkled over the meat?).

79 When Eumaeus takes his place opposite ‘the stranger’, this signals
that an intimate conversation is to follow; a significant *seating arrange-
ment.

80–108 The host Eumaeus exhorts his guest to eat (here and in 443–5);
cf. Menelaus in 4.60–4, Circe in 10.373, Medon in 17.174–6, and the exhor-
tation to sleep by a Phaeacian servant in 7.342. He takes this opportunity
again to bring up what is uppermost in his mind: an apology for the fact that
he can only offer the food of servants, young piglets (80–1a), via his state-
ment that the full-grown and fattened swine go to the Suitors (81b), evolves
into a denunciation of the godless Suitors (82–95) and a proud inventory of
his master’s livestock (96–104), and ends again with the statement that the
best swine go to the Suitors (105–8).

81–95 This is one of the places where Odysseus is gradually informed
about the Suitors; cf. 13.376–81n.

Eumaeus strongly condemns the Suitors: they do not fear ὑπαίθρια, ‘the
watch kept by the gods on the deeds of men’; they woo Penelope ὀυκ . . .
δίκαιος, ‘not . . . in the right way’; they eat and drink ὑπέρβους, ‘in excess’;
they ‘devour’ Odysseus’ goods (the verb δαρδάτω is used in Il. 11.479 of
wild beasts). His condemnation shows Odysseus that his servant is ‘on the
right side’, and the narratees that Odysseus’ upcoming bloody revenge on
the Suitors is justified (cf. 1.224–9n.).

96–108 There is dramatic irony † in the servant describing to his master
the latter’s own possessions; cf. 13.242–7n.

109–10 Describing, as is his wont, the execution of what was previously
announced in a speech (here Eumaeus’ exhortation to eat: 80), the narrator
notes that Odysseus ate and drank ‘ravenously’ and ‘heartily’; cf. 6.250
(there Odysseus had not eaten for a long time; here his hearty appetite may
be part of his role as a beggar).

Although Odysseus did not react to any of Eumaeus’ earlier speeches, the
narrator now explicitly records his silence, giving it an ominous undertone
by revealing (to the narratees) his unspoken thoughts: inwardly he was
‘planning mischief for the Suitors’. This is the first in a series of similar pas-
sages, where Odysseus outwardly shows no emotions, but inwardly is
seething or brooding; cf. 17.235–8, 465; 18.90–4, 343–5; 20.9–16, 183–4, and
In all these cases he is doing exactly what Athena had told him to do in 13.309–10 (‘you must endure much grief in silence, putting up with the violence of men’) and giving proof of his celebrated capacity to endure, restrain his emotions, and keep a secret. In the course of time, his unspoken feelings will become more and more confident and menacing. For the Suitors’ unspoken thoughts, cf. 16.448n.

Odysseus’ (implicit) embedded focalization † triggers character-language †: *κακῶς, ‘bad’, ‘mischief’ (note that, as in ἀείκέα μήδετο ἔργα, II. 22.395 = 23.24, κακά does not imply moral criticism on the part of the narrator, but forms the content of Odysseus’ thoughts: he intends to do harm to his enemies) and φυτέυω, ‘to plant’ (five times in direct speech, twice in embedded focalization: here and 17.27; the metaphor is used in the Odyssey almost exclusively in connection with Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors: 2.165; 14.218; 17.27, 82, and 159).

The narrator is less clear than usual: after he (= Odysseus) had eaten, he (= Eumaeus) gave him the cup, from which he was wont to drink. He (= Odysseus) took it, rejoiced, and said, etc. We have the pattern which recurs several times throughout the scene: Eumaeus making a generous and personal gesture, which pleases Odysseus; cf. Introduction.

The ‘after-dinner’ conversation is devoted in large part to the subject of Odysseus: ‘the stranger’ thrice announces that Odysseus is alive and will come back (158–64, 321–33, 393–400; an instance of a triadic structure †), but each time meets with scepticism on the part of Eumaeus (166–7, 363–71, 402–6), who the third time cuts off further discussion (407–8); the same pattern, ‘announcements-denials-cutting short’, is found on a smaller scale in 3.201–52n., on a larger and more complex scale in 19.53–604n.8

The information which ‘the stranger’ provides on Odysseus becomes increasingly specific: ‘maybe I have seen your master and can report on him’ (120); ‘Odysseus will come back this lukabas’ (year, month, Apollo’s feast-day?) (161–4); ‘I have heard about Odysseus in Thesprotia (= near to Ithaca) from the king, who recently entertained him. I have seen with my own eyes the riches he has collected. I have been told that he is presently in Dodona (= near to Ithaca), but that a ship is ready to bring him home’ (321–33).

Usually it is the host who opens the conversation and asks his

---

guest who he is, and this is what the narratees expect to happen here, after Eumaeus’ announcement in 47 that after dinner he would ask the stranger ‘where he came from and what he had suffered’. In fact, we find a reversal of the ritual of the *identification of the guest, in that the guest takes the initiative, asking (A) after the name of his host’s master and suggesting (B) that perhaps he knows him and can give news about him. Not until 187–90 will Eumaeus ask his guest the traditional question.

Nowhere does the narrator give us a clue as to why Odysseus takes the initiative in launching this conversation. He has already been informed about the situation in the palace and there is no indication that it is a test, as in the case of the conversation with Penelope in Book 19. Apparently, the narratorial motivation †, the narrator’s wish to employ his ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern (cf. Introduction), has taken precedence over any actorial motivation †. In any case, the narrator has taken care to make ‘the stranger’s opening speech naturally connected to what goes before: in 115–16 Odysseus reacts to Eumaeus’ description of the wealth of his master in 96–108 (cf. ‘progressive’ γάρ and ‘so rich and valiant as you tell’), in 117 he reacts to Eumaeus’ statement that his master went to Troy in 70–1 (cf. the verbatim repetition ‘for the sake of Agamemnon’s honour’, and ‘you say’).

The narratees may note the particular aptness of ‘the stranger’/Odysseus saying that ‘he has wandered much’; cf. 13.429–38n.

122–47 Eumaeus answers ‘the stranger’s’ remarks in reverse order †: (B’) ‘I distrust wanderers with news about my master; he is dead’ (122–37; ‘catch-word’ technique †: ἀλοχήμενος picks up ἀλῆθην in 120, ἀγγέλλων picks up ἀγγεῖλαμι in 120), and (A’) ‘I will never get a master like him again. I dearly miss Odysseus, whose name I shrink from using’ (138–47). The reverse order postpones Odysseus’ name until the very end of the speech.

Eumaeus’ denial that the stranger could tell him anything about his master forms a prelude to the sequence of announcements and denials concerning Odysseus which follow; cf. 112–409n.

122–32 Eumaeus’ distrust of ‘the stranger’ is a specimen of the general *distrust which all of Odysseus’ philoi have developed during the long years of his absence, after many a disappointing experience. In 372–85 he will return to the topic and reveal that he has once been fobbed off in the past.

9 Denniston (1959: 84).
Eumaeus suggests that ‘the stranger’ is perhaps motivated by a desire for care, more specifically clothing (as a reward; cf. 152), when he promises news about his master. Clothing is a common guest-gift (cf., e.g., 8.425; 15.123–30; 24.277), which must be especially welcome in the case of vagrants clad in rags.

Eumaeus here introduces the ‘gift of clothes’ motif, which will recur many times in the second half of the *Odyssey*: ‘the stranger’ asks Eumaeus for clothes as a reward, should his message of Odysseus’ return turn out to be true (152–7, 395–6); the swineherd declines the proposition, but later announces that Telemachus will provide his guest with clothes (515–16 = 15.337–8), as Telemachus indeed promises to do (16.78–80). Penelope promises ‘the stranger’ clothes, should it turn out that he has told the truth about Odysseus (17.549–50, 556–8) and later, if he is able to string the bow (21.338–41). The Suitor Eurymachus too – contemptuously – promises ‘the beggar’ clothes, if he will work for him as a labourer (18.361). In the end, Odysseus, restored to his former status, is clothed in his own garments by one of his servants (23.155).

133–6 Eumaeus, Telemachus (1.161–2), and Laertes (24.290–2) do not only believe that Odysseus is dead, they actually call up horrible pictures of the state in which (they think) the latter’s body finds itself: his flesh eaten by fish, dogs, birds, his bones covered with sand, rotting, or swept along by the waves. All of this contrasts with the careful treatment which a corpse is normally given, as Laertes explicitly notes (24.292–6). This is the Odyssean variant of the ‘lack of care’ motif, so often found in the *Iliad* (e.g., 21.201–4).10

For Eumaeus’ changing opinion as to whether Odysseus is alive or not, cf. 61–8n.

138–47 For Odysseus’ gentleness, cf. 61–8n.

138–44 As in 4.100–7, the final revelation of Odysseus’ name is made in the form of a summary priamel †: ‘(summary) I will never find a gentle master like him, (foil) not even if I returned to my parents. (recapitulation) But I do not weep over them so much any more – though I desire to see them again, back in my own country. (climax) But I long for Odysseus.

140–3 Eumaeus provides a glimpse of his own personal history: he lives far away from his parents and his fatherland. This detail whets the narratees’

10 Griffin (1980: 115–19).
appetite for the full story, which will follow in 15.403–84, and at the same
time prepares them for his heartfelt sympathy in 361–2 for the man who has
suffered a fate so similar to his own.

144 For Eumaeus’ πόθος, ‘longing for’ Odysseus, cf. 1.343–4n.

144–7 This is the first time in the conversation that Eumaeus mentions
Odysseus’ name, and though this suppression is a common motif (cf.
Introduction), he is the only one to reflect on his own reticence: he shrinks
from mentioning his name (presumably because it is ill-omened; cf.
1.48–62n.) and instead refers to him as ἡθεῖος, ‘gentle’ (?). This is an affective
appellative for an elder brother or friend, which belongs to the
character-language † (always, seven times, in direct speech), and which
Eumaeus aptly uses for Odysseus, (i) because of his gentle nature (cf. 139:
ἡπιον), and perhaps (ii) because he was raised together with Odysseus’
sister (15.363–5) and is in fact a kind of half-brother.

The dramatic irony † of Eumaeus speaking about his ‘absent’ master in
the latter’s presence, is underlined by the repeated ‘even when he is not
present’ (145) and ‘even when he is far away’ (147).

148–64 In his answer, Odysseus does not react to A’ (Eumaeus’ revela-
tion that his master is Odysseus), but does respond emphatically to B’ (his
distrust of messengers with news about Odysseus): ‘You say that Odysseus
will not come back. (announcement of oath) But I will declare under oath
that Odysseus will come back. Let there be a reward for me, when he has
come home. Before that, I will take nothing. For I hate those who yielding
to poverty tell idle things (‘catch-word’ technique †: ἀπεκτήλια βάζει in 157
echoes 127). (oath) Let Zeus, and the table of friendship, and Odysseus’
hearth be my witness: in truth, Odysseus will come back this lukabas.’

This is the first in a series of three announcements by ‘the
stranger’/Odysseus; cf. 112–409n.

150 Odysseus’ claim that Eumaeus is always distrustful is something of
an exaggeration and a clear instance of the *‘always’ of quarrels.

152–7 For the ‘gift of clothes’ motif, cf. 122–37n.

158–64 A *prolepsis of Odysseus’ return here takes the form of an oath,
which ‘the beggar’/Odysseus will repeat (with various modifications) to
Penelope (19.303–7) and Philoetius (20.230–4). After his brief pre-oath of
152 (‘Odysseus will come back’), he now adds that Odysseus will take
revenge on ‘whoever dishonours Odysseus’ wife and son’. This assurance
suits Odysseus better than his assumed personality; cf. 13.429–38n.
166–90 Eumaeus’ speech revolves around three topics: (topic: Odysseus) I will not honour you with a reward (‘catch-word’ technique †: Eumaeus’ ἐὐσαγγέλιον picks up Odysseus’ ἐὐσαγγέλιον in 152) and Odysseus will not come back. (transition) But let us leave the oath; may Odysseus come home, as I, Penelope, Laertes and Telemachus hope. (new topic: Telemachus) I now grieve over Odysseus’ son, Telemachus, who is away on a dangerous trip. (transition) But let us leave him, whether he will escape or not. (new topic: ‘the stranger’) But tell me about your own sorrows and who you are.

This is the first in a series of three denials; cf. 112–409n.

174–84 The fact that Eumaeus reveals his concern about Telemachus to ‘a stranger’ and the way in which he expresses himself shows his paternal attachment to the boy: the comparison ‘like a sapling’ is elsewhere used by Thetis of Achilles (II. 18.56 = 437); the wish that the son will surpass his father is voiced also by Hector of Astyanax (II. 6.476–82); and in line 174 παιδὸς may be understood as ‘my son’ until the addition ‘whom Odysseus fathered’ (for this type of wordplay, cf. 19.358n.). The passage prepares for the emotional reunion between the swineherd and Telemachus in 16.4–48n.

Like many others, Eumaeus shows great apprehension at Telemachus’ trip to Pylos and Sparta, considering it an act of insanity, and thereby increases the youth’s kleos; cf. 1.94–5n. The narratees may note the dramatic irony † when he says that ‘one of the gods deprived him of his senses’, knowing that it was (wise) Athena who spurred Telemachus on.

The narrator has not told us that Eumaeus was informed about the Suitors’ ambush and the swineherd’s knowledge is best explained as an instance of transference †. It increases his anxiety over Telemachus and revives the narratees’ memory of the ambush (cf. 4.658–74n.).

187–90 Only now does Eumaeus ask the customary question concerning his guest’s identity (cf. 115–20n.), first the international question (187) and then the local, Ithacan question (188–90); cf. 1.169–77n.

192–359 ‘The stranger’s answer ostensibly pertains only to the third topic of Eumaeus’ speech (‘the stranger’), but in the course of his story he will also come to speak of the first topic (Odysseus) (321–33) and make a second announcement of the latter’s return (cf. 112–409n.); he does not react to what Eumaeus said about the second topic (Telemachus), because he has been informed and comforted concerning his son by Athena in 13.412–28.
This is the longest of Odysseus’ *lying tales, again a mixture of facts and fictional elements, the latter often allomorphs of his own adventures. ‘The Cretan’ starts *ab ovo* (cf. 1.10n.) and gives a full chronological account of his adventurous life so far (cf. his earlier claim that he had wandered much: 120): ‘I am a Cretan, son of a concubine and Castor, who honoured me as much as his legitimate children (*fiction*). I was strong and courageous in the war and played a foremost role in ambushes (*fact*). Before going to Troy I assembled a great deal of wealth in nine raids (*fact*; cf. 1.177 and 257–64). Then I went with Idomeneus to Troy, which we took in the tenth year (*fact*).

Having returned home, I left again after one month. I sacrificed for six days to the gods and then on the seventh sailed to Egypt, arriving there on the fifth day (*fiction*). I urged my companions to stay with the ships and only send out spies. Giving way to their violent spirit they did not obey, but plundered the fields, took the wives and children captive and killed the men. The next morning the citizens came back and killed or took captive all my men (an *allomorph* of the Ciconian adventure, 9.39–66). I supplicated the Egyptian king, who took me home with him and protected me against his angry compatriots (*fiction*). For seven years I stayed with the king and collected much wealth. Then a Phoenician invited me to his home, but after one year suggested we make a trip to Libya, in fact intending to sell me there as a slave (*fiction*). The ship was shipwrecked in a storm. All the sailors drowned, only I was able to save myself, sitting on the mast (an *allomorph* of the storm after Thrinacia: 12.403–25; note the *verbatim* repetition 301b–304 = 12.403b–406, 305–9 = 12.415–19). Having landed on the Thesprotian shore, I was led to the palace by the king’s son (an *allomorph* of Odysseus’ meeting with Nausicaa in Book 6; cf. 317–20n.). The king received me (*fiction*) and showed me the riches which another guest, Odysseus, had collected (a reference to Odysseus’ real riches which lie hidden in an Ithacan cave: 13.366–71). He told me that Odysseus was in Dodona to consult the oracle about his *nostos*, whether to return openly or secretly (an *allomorph* of Odysseus’ consultation of Tiresias in 11.100–37; cf. esp. 11.120). He also swore that a ship was ready to bring Odysseus home (*fiction*; the strong expression ‘swore’ is better suited to Odysseus’ present situation, where he wants to convince Eumaeus, than to the situation in the past). The king provided me with an escort on a Thesprotian ship, but the sailors decided to sell me as a slave (*fiction*). They clothed me in rags (an *allomorph* of Athena’s metamorphosis of Odysseus in 13.429–38, note especially 342 = 13.434).
When they reached Ithaca, they bound me and themselves left the ship to have a meal on the shore. The gods loosened my bonds and I swam ashore (fiction). The sailors soon gave up looking for me and left. The gods led me to the hut of a sensible man (an allomorph of Athena’s instruction to Odysseus to go to Eumaeus: 13.404–6).

Odysseus makes use of his repertoire of stock elements (cf. Appendix E), adapting them to the situation and his addressee: he is a Cretan of wealthy family, who later accumulated even more wealth in Egypt (this must make clear to Eumaeus that despite his rags he is in fact a man of standing); he fought in Troy (like Eumaeus’ master; cf. 70–1); he was twice taken captive and almost sold as a slave (from 140–3 ‘the stranger’ knows that Eumaeus was forced to leave his parents and by providing himself with a similar fate he can count on the latter’s sympathy; in 15.415–84 it will become clear how close the similarities are); arriving by chance in Thesprotia, he hears about Odysseus’ whereabouts and imminent return (inserted to counter the swineherd’s pessimism and scepticism; ‘the stranger’ here makes his own words in 119–20 come true); Thesprotian pirates rob him of his clothes and give him rags (this explains his present shabby appearance). In accordance with the pious nature of his addressee, he adds a moralistic slant to his tale: he himself is pious (cf. his large sacrifice before setting out for Egypt in 249–51) and helped by the gods (348–9 and 357–9), his hubristic companions are punished by Zeus (262–70), the Egyptian king prevents his compatriots from killing him out of respect for the wrath of Zeus Xenios (283–4), the Phoenicians are punished by Zeus for their attempt to sell him as a slave (300–9).

The lying tale is a *first-person narrative, which manifests itself in the frequent use of character-language †: ἀποφεόλιος, ‘worthless’ (212; speech only, four times), δύπη, ‘suffering’ (215, 338; speech only, four times), δυσμενής, ‘hostile, enemy’ (218, 221; thirty-one times in speech, once in simple narrator-text: Il. 22.403), ἀνυγρός, ‘wretched’ (226), στυγγερός, ‘baleful’ (235), χαλεπός, ‘harsh’ (239; forty-nine times in speech, seven times in simple narrator-text), δειλός, ‘miserable’ (243), ὑβρι-, ‘wantonness’ (262), κοκκός (269, 270, 284, 289, 337, 342), ἀλοχός (313). ‘The stranger’ uses his ex eventu knowledge to insert many prolepses † (235–6, 243, 275, 300, and 337–8), which invariably stress the misery in store for him. His knowledge of what went on in the mind of the Phoenician in 296–7 is not inconsistent with the restrictions of first-person narration, since he adds
that he had already guessed what was going on (298). In accordance with Jörgensen’s law †, he speaks of θεό (348, 357), θεός (227, 242, 309), or Ζεύς (235, 268, 273, 300).

Uniquely, Odysseus twice during his long tale turns to his addressee: ‘I was not a contemptible man nor one who fled in the war, but now that has all gone, but still when you look at the stubble I think you will recognize (what the corn used to be)’ (212–15) and ‘(the Phoenicians) clad me in rags, the very ones you now see yourself with your own eyes’ (342–3); together with his emotional language and ominous prelapses, these passages are intended to touch Eumaeus, who, indeed, will show himself very moved by the tale.

192–8 An *emotional preamble precedes Odysseus’ actual story, which in 196–8 takes the form of the *‘(not) even + hyperbole’ motif (‘Even in a year I would not finish telling you my sorrows’); note the ‘catch-word’ technique † (Odysseus picking up Eumaeus’ κῆδεα in 185).

192 As often, an Odyssean character stresses that he will tell the truth, only to proceed with a lie; cf. 1.179n.

249 For the typical six days, cf. 9.82n.

252–6 The stress on the ease of the voyage out prepares for the contrast to follow.

276–80 A special variant of the *supplication’ type-scene: the ‘Cretan’ throws away his armour as a sign of surrender (a unique detail occasioned by the fact that his whole army has already been defeated); (i) suppliant’s approach; (ii) gesture (clasping and kissing of knees); (iv) acceptance of supplication (which here takes the form of the king taking the Cretan into his chariot).

301–15 For (the elements of) this ‘storm’ scene, cf. Appendix D.

314 For the ‘for nine days . . . and on the tenth . . .’ motif, cf. 9.82n.

317–20 A highly condensed instance of the *stranger meets with local inhabitant’ story-pattern: the son of the Thesprotian king leads ‘the Cretan’ to the house of his father. Its details (‘the stranger’ was ‘overpowered by cold and fatigue’ and the prince gave him clothes) recall Odysseus’ meeting with Nausicaa (Odysseus was ‘worn out by sleep and fatigue’: 6.2, Nausicaa gave him clothes: 6.214). Thus, he – implicitly – pays tribute to his young benefactress; cf. 8.457–68n.

348–9 The typical *ease’ of divine action and existence (again in 357–9).

357–9 ‘The beggar’/Odysseus ends his embedded narrative at a natural point, viz. his arrival at Eumaeus’ house; cf. 7.297n.
361–89 The narratees may savour the dramatic irony † of Eumaeus’ reaction: he believes Odysseus’ entire lying tale, but rejects the most important fact in it, the imminent return of Odysseus; for reactions to stories, cf. 4.266n. This is his second denial; cf. 112–409n.

His speech displays a ring-composition †:

A You moved me with your story of woe (361–2),
B but you lie about Odysseus (363–5a).
C Odysseus is dead (365b–371).
D I sit here and no longer go to the city, while others eagerly interrogate messengers with news about Odysseus (372–7).
D’ I no longer fancy doing so, ever since I was deceived by an Aetolian (378–9),
C’ who said that Odysseus would come back with his companions (380–5).
B’ You, too, shouldn’t tell lies to me (386–7),
A’ for I will look after you even without them, out of respect for Zeus and pity for you (388–9).

367–71 The same idea was voiced, in almost the same words, by Telemachus; cf. 1.236–41n.

375–7 The different reactions to negative rumours about Odysseus – his philoi are sad, while the Suitors are pleased – mirrors the twofold reaction to Phemius’ song about the nostos of the Greeks in 1.325–44 (the Suitors listen in silence, while Penelope cries).

378–85 This anecdote explains Eumaeus’ *distrust of messengers, which he voiced earlier in more general terms (122–32). There Penelope was the victim of credulity, here it is Eumaeus himself. The concocted story of the Aetolian closely resembles Odysseus’ own *lying tale: thus we find the stock elements Crete, Idomeneus, and storm, and the same mixture of fact (Odysseus will come back with a great deal of possessions) and fiction (he is presently on Crete with Idomeneus). Of course, these similarities make ‘the stranger’s’ tale in 192–359 extra suspect in the eyes of Eumaeus.

380 For the Aetolian’s fate, exile and wanderings after killing a man, cf. 13.258–71n.

391–408 In a last effort to convince the swineherd, ‘the stranger’ pro-
poses a wager in which he will stake his life on Odysseus’ imminent return in exchange for a set of clothes (the ‘gift of clothes’ motif) and a passage to Dulichium (cf. 335). Pious and hospitable *Eumaeus typically reacts with horror at the idea of killing his guest. This is the third announcement and denial, after which this time the conversation is cut short (‘it is time to eat’); cf. 112–409n.

409–12 ‘Cued by’ Eumaeus’ last words (407–8), the other herdsmen now enter the stage; cf. 24–8n.

413–53 In 72–111 Eumaeus had prepared two young piglets, the food of servants, for ‘the stranger’, now he offers him the best of the swine; believing the latter’s tale (cf. 361–2), he treats his guest as a man of status and wealth (233–4). Like the first meal, this one forms part of a ‘sacrifice’ type-scene. Just as the swineherd now prepares a richer meal for his guest, the narrator describes it in more detail, taking the opportunity to show, once more, *Eumaeus’ kind and hospitable nature (cf. his explicit evaluations in 421 and 433, and Odysseus’ thankful prayer of 440–1):

413–17 Eumaeus orders the returning herdsmen to bring ‘the best pig’.
(though he has not recognized his master, ‘the stranger’ has risen so much in his esteem that he gives him what he normally gives the Suitors; cf. 19. The narratees may note the progress Odysseus is making in recapturing what is his)

418–19 Preparation of firewood (unique element; another sign of Eumaeus’ humble circumstances?) and execution of order (the best pig turns out to be ‘a very fat, five-year old’ animal).

420–4 (i) Preliminaries and prayer: victim stands near hearth instead of altar, some of its hairs are thrown into the fire (cf. 3.446), the content of Eumaeus’ prayer is – uniquely – recorded (in indirect speech), so as to make clear, once again, his loyalty to his master.

425–6a (ii) Killing of victim: Eumaeus clubs the pig to death with a piece of leftover firewood instead of an axe (cf. 3.449–50).

426b–429 (iii) Preparation of sacrificial meat: instead of burning the thigh bones (cf. 3.456–8), Eumaeus burns all limbs.

430–1 (v) Preparation of meat for meal (formulaic lines).

432–54 (vi) Meal (expanded). The division of the meat (432–8) is nowhere

recorded in so much detail (cf. 20.281–3, Il. 9.217); this wealth of
detail brings to the fore Eumaeus’ righteousness (explicitly noted by
the narrator: 433), rustic piety (he assigns a portion of the food to the
nymphs and Hermes, a – unique – second offering after 429), and
hospitality (he gives his guest the chine, portion of honour; cf.
4.65–6n.). After a brief exchange (439–45), the sacrifice of first-
offerings (unique addition), and a libation, the actual eating follows
(453–4, formulaic lines).

415 Eumaeus’ qualification of the stranger as ‘from a far away country’,
thrown into relief by the runover position, continues the dramatic irony † of
145 and 147.

415–17 The narratees are now given to understand that Eumaeus not
only holds a grudge against the Suitors on moral grounds (cf. 82–95) and
because of his loyalty to his master (cf. 26–8), but also for personal reasons:
he and his companions have to work very hard without receiving a proper
reward (of the type indicated by him in 62–7); cf. the complaint of the maid-
servant who has to grind the corn for the Suitors in 20.105–19.

438 Again (cf. 36n.), the narrator makes use of the periphrastic denomi-
nation † ‘his master’ to point up the dramatic irony †.

440–1 As in 53–4, Odysseus reacts to the swineherd’s hospitality, specifi-
cally his honouring him with the chine (γερα¤ρεω = γέραρεω: 437), with a
benediction. He addresses Eumaeus by his own name (though the latter had
not mentioned it to him), something which does not surprise the swineherd
and hence should not bother the narratees. Odysseus cannot resist teasing
Eumaeus a little, mirroring in 441 the latter’s το¤ιν έντα of 364: while
Eumaeus meant ‘why do you lie to me, noble man that you are’, Odysseus
means ‘you honour me, poor man that I am’; a refined instance of the ‘catch-
word’ technique †.

443–5 As in 80–1, Eumaeus holds a brief ‘bon appétit’ speech. The pious
‘a god will give one thing, leave (i.e., not give) another’ is his modest reaction
to Odysseus’ benediction. His speech ends, as often, with a *gnomic utter-
ance.

449–52 The narrator’s explicit characterization † of the servant
Mesaulius serves to reveal Eumaeus’ status: although himself a servant, he
has a servant, whom he acquired with his own possessions; cf. the building
of his own courtyard (7–9).
A special variant of the *‘retiring for the night’ type-scene: first
the others make haste to go to bed (455–6; they do not actually go to bed
until 523–4); then (after he has secured a warm cloak for himself: 459–517)
the guest, for whom a bed has been prepared, goes to bed (518–22); finally,
the host, who sleeps outside next to his animals (instead of next to his wife),
also retires (523–32).

A unique description of a *sunset, which in its negative tone – the
night is bad, moonless, wet, and windy – is tailored to the context, preparing
for Odysseus’ request for a cloak. We might even consider taking the sunset
as (implicitly) focalized by Odysseus, because of the combination νόξ . . .
κακῆ, which recurs in his ensuing lying tale (475) and in Il. 10.188 in embed-
ded focalization, and the presence of ‘came upon’, which implies ‘them’ or
‘Odysseus’ (cf. Il. 8.488 and 9.474, where we have datives of the persons ‘for
whom’ night falls); for focalized sunsets/sunrises, cf. 13.28–35n.

Odysseus *tests (πειρητίζων) Eumaeus’ disposition towards
strangers:12 does he care for him enough to give him his cloak or exhort one
of the others to do so? He does not ask him for the cloak directly but indi-
rectly, by telling him a tale from his heroic past, in which during a similar
cold night he was given the cloak of someone else. Eumaeus passes the test:
he understands the hint contained in the story and gives ‘the stranger’ his
own cloak.

To the narratees, Odysseus’ secret intention in telling the story of
the cloak is revealed by means of his embedded focalization † (shifter: εἴ
πως + optatives).

The Cretan’s speech is a ring-composition†:

A (preamble) Perhaps I will sound presumptuous – wine makes a man
bold – but I will nevertheless speak out (462–7).
B (nostalgic wish) If only I was young again (468),
C (paradigmatic tale) as when . . . (469–502)
B’ If only I was of that age again (503),
(conclusion) then someone would give me a cloak. But now they
dishonour me, because I wear poor clothing (504–6).

The presumptuous (ἐξεύμνοσ: 463) character of the tale lies in the fact that it portrays the beggar as a warrior, on a par with Odysseus, Menelaus, and the Aetolian leader Thoas (for whom, cf., e.g., II. 2.638\textsuperscript{13}).

463–6 For the power of wine to make a man bold, cf. 21.288–310n.
468–505 For this type of nostalgic wish, cf. 1.253–69n.
468–503 The *lying tale which ‘the Cretan’/Odysseus tells agrees with the information he had provided about himself earlier (192–359): it takes place during the Trojan War (cf. 235–42) and shows him participating in an ambush (217–21). With an eye to the story’s ‘argument’ function †, to persuade Eumaeus to give him a cloak, Odysseus (i) sketches circumstances which closely resemble those of the situation at hand (it was a cold and windy night: 475; cf. 457–8); (ii) increases the pathos through the *‘(all) the others . . . but X (alone) . . .’ motif (478–82); and (iii) does not eschew exaggeration (*‘the Cretan’ feared he would die of cold: 487–9).

The central hero of the story is clever Odysseus; the narratees can appreciate the way in which Odysseus, even when he is in disguise, manages to pay himself a compliment (cf. 13.429–38n.).

480–9 A revealing insight into the mechanism of ‘double motivation’ †: inwardly, ‘the Cretan’ ascribes his failure to take a cloak with him to his own ‘thoughtlessness’ (481); addressing Odysseus, he ascribes it to a god (*δαξιμων: 488).

508–17 Eumaeus’ speech begins with a *reaction to ‘the Cretan’s story: calling it an excellent καινος (*‘story with a hidden meaning’), he subtly makes clear that he sees through the hidden message of the story. Therefore, ‘the stranger’ will get what he wants, a cloak, and anything else he needs. But – and once more the narratees are reminded of the swine-herd’s humble circumstances – tomorrow he must wear his own clothes again (i.e., the cloak is only a loan, not a gift); for a permanent *gift of clothes he must ask Telemachus. The reference to Telemachus follows naturally in Eumaeus’ argument, but at the same time it prepares the narratees for the latter’s visit to Eumaeus’ farm (Book 16), which Athena’s words in 13.411–15 (*‘wait at Eumaeus’ farm while I summon Telemachus’) had already suggested and which the goddess will arrange for soon afterwards (cf. 15.38–40).

520–2 The description of Eumaeus’ cloak makes clear that it serves pre-

\textsuperscript{13} Brennan (1987).
cisely the purpose which Odysseus had in mind: the swineherd wears it whenever a ‘violent winter storm’ arises.

524–33 One last time *Eumaeus provides a display of his loyal husbandry, which is noted appreciatively by Odysseus. The latter’s positive embedded focalization † (526–7, shifter: ‘he was pleased’) of his swineherd mirrors the narratorial evaluation of 3–4, but is stronger (‘he took very good care’ versus ‘he took care’).

528–31 Before going out into the cold night, Eumaeus protects himself, in a cross between an ‘arming’ type-scene and a *‘dressing’ type-scene, tailored to his circumstances:14 first he slings his sword over his shoulders (cf., e.g., 2.3 = 4.308, *Il* 3.334), then he puts on a cloak ‘to shield him against the wind’ (a unique qualification, triggered by the circumstances; cf. 457–8) and a goatskin (a modest variant of the panther or lion skins worn by some warriors: *Il* 3.17; 10.23), finally he takes a javelin ‘to ward off dogs or men’ (cf. 13.225 and contrast the ceremonial spear which men take with them when they go out: 2.10; 20.127, and the spears which warriors carry to kill opponents).

532–3 For the rock under which the swine and Eumaeus sleep, cf. 13.407–8n.

14 Arend (1933: 98).
Book 15 describes the last part of the night of the thirty-fifth day, the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh day, and the early morning of the thirty-eighth day; cf. Appendix A. We return to the ‘Telemachus’ storyline, which was dropped by the narrator in 4.624. Athena now carries out Zeus’s injunction in 5.25–7 to escort Telemachus home safely: she gives him advice (28–42) and sends him a favourable wind (292–4); from 495 onwards he is back on Ithaca again. Meanwhile the narrator briefly switches back to Odysseus (301–495); the use of the ‘interlace’ technique † at such short intervals prepares for the merging of the ‘Telemachus’ and ‘Odysseus’ storylines in the next book (cf. Appendix B).

In accordance with the ‘continuity of time’ principle †, the same amount of time has elapsed for Telemachus as for Odysseus (who occupied the stage during the last ten books), viz. twenty-nine days.1 That a considerable time has passed is suggested by Athena coming ‘in order to remind (Telemachus) of his homecoming’ (3), rebuking him because ‘it no longer becomes him to wander away from home’ (10), Telemachus asking Menelaus ‘to send him on his way now at last’ (ἡδη νῦν: 65, and cf. ἡδη in 66 and 88; cf. 10.472, where Odysseus’ comrades beg him to remember home ‘now at last’ after a year’s stay with Circe), and being greeted by Eumaeus as a son who has been away for ten years (16.18); cf. also the anticipation of an absence of ‘eleven or twelve days’ in 2.374 and 4.588. Although Telemachus’ long stay in Sparta is primarily the result of the ‘continuity of time’ principle, the narrator has taken care to motivate it (as he did in a similar case in 4.625–57n.), stressing the impressionability of Telemachus (cf. 4.43–6, 71–5) and the

---

generous hospitality of Menelaus. At the same time, he makes it clear that, despite Athena’s mild rebuke in 10–12, Telemachus is not in fact negligent: she finds him sleeplessly worrying about his father (7–8) and in his subsequent dealings with Pisistratus (44–55), Menelaus (62–91), and – indirectly – Nestor (193–216), he displays a strong determination, bordering on impoliteness, to hasten home; cf. also his hurried dressing (60–2). The boy’s prolonged stay also constitutes one of the many parallels between the experiences of father and son (cf. Introduction to 1): both meet with overzealous hosts, who, offering food, forgetfulness, gifts, and entertainment, confront their guests with a mixture of pleasure and pressure which they can hardly resist (cf. the similarity of Telemachus’ and Odysseus’ enthusiasm in 4,595–8 and 11,356–9).

In certain respects the Telemachus we meet here and in subsequent books has matured in comparison with Books 1–4: he takes the initiative (193–201 and 280–6), no longer shies away from addressing older people (62–6), accepts the responsibility for a suppliant (222–83), and from 217 onwards acts on his own, without a mentor. His rise in status is confirmed by the length of his ‘departure’ scene (56–183n.). This development warrants his position as Odysseus’ helper, and he will be the first to whom Odysseus reveals his true identity. He remains, however, youthfully impatient (43–55) and intimidated by the Suitors (16,69–89; this will not change until his reunion with his father). He has more opportunity to display his ability to dissimulate, keeping the return of Odysseus a secret (e.g., 17,108–49) and playing the roles of immature youngster or haughty young aristocrat (cf. 17,1–25n.). Finally, he demonstrates that he has inherited his father’s capacity to endure in silence (17,489–91 and 20,384–6). His politeness is unchanged (cf. his embarrassment that he cannot receive his guests properly in 15,513–17 and 16,68–89).

1–47 The narrator returns to Athena and continues the execution of her announcement in 13,413–15 (‘I will go to Sparta, to call back Telemachus’); cf. 13.439–40n. Typically (cf. 5.1–42n.), he does not refer back to the earlier situation (‘Athena, who, as I said before, set out for Sparta . . .’), but repeats the information given before (1–3 ≈ 13.439–40). In keeping with the ‘continuity of time’ principle †, the same amount of time has elapsed for Athena as for Odysseus, and hence she arrives in Sparta at night-time.

Athena’s exhortation of Telemachus takes the form of a ‘dream’ type-scene, with certain modifications due to the fact that Telemachus is not
asleep: she (ii) has left for Sparta (1–3); (iv) finds the persons sought (4), (i) who are sleeping in the porch, i.e., Pisistratus is asleep, while Telemachus lies awake (5–8); (v) stands near Telemachus (not near his head, because he is not asleep: 9); (vi) speaks (10–42); (vii) leaves (43); and (viii) Telemachus reacts to the dream (44–7).

We are not told that Athena adopts the usual mortal disguise of dream figures or gods visiting mortals. This would suggest that she appears to him as Athena. Since this is, in fact, a rare honour (cf. 13.221–440n.) and since she nowhere refers to herself as Athena (as she did in 13.293–305) but in 34–5 speaks in general terms about ‘of the gods . . . whoever shields and protects you’, it seems more plausible that the narrator has failed to record that she appears to Telemachus as ‘Mentor’.

1–8 The change of scene †, from Ithaca to Sparta, is accomplished by following in the footsteps of Athena. At the same time, there is correspondence of action: both on Ithaca and in Sparta people are asleep.

4–8 Telemachus’ *sleeplessness is emphasized through the contrast with Pisistratus’ sleep (and that of the object of his worries, Odysseus: 14.523). The youth’s insomnia and his worries about his father demonstrate his basic loyalty to the cause of Odysseus and show him, as in 1.114–17, in the right mood to receive Athena’s injunctions.

For the somewhat awkward ‘she found X and Y sleeping, X was asleep, Y was awake’, cf. II. 9.714 + 10.1–4.

8 This is the only time that we find the combination ἄμβροσην νύξ, ‘divine night’ outside direct speech, where it occurs eight times. It is perhaps triggered by Telemachus’ implicit embedded focalization †: only for mortals does it make sense to call night divine, and in fact all other instances of ‘divine night’ are found in speeches of mortals or gods disguised as mortals.

10–42 Athena’s speech is both a typical ‘dream’ speech, urging a dreamer to action (cf. 6.25–40n.), and a *‘table of contents’ speech, announcing to the narratees what is to come: ‘(rebuke) It is not right that you stay away from home so long, (situation) while at home overbearing men are devouring your possessions. (advice) Ask Menelaus to send you home (announcement of 56–183), in order that you may still find your mother at home. (situation) For her father and brothers urge her to remarry and in so doing she might take with her your possessions. (advice) So upon your return give your possessions into the custody of a trusted servant (this will
never happen, because by that time Telemachus will have been reunited with Odysseus). *(transition)* But I will tell you something else. *(situation)* The Suitors are lying in ambush for you, *(advice)* so sail at a distance from the islands and during the night *(announcement of 295–300).* When you have arrived on Ithaca, send your ship to the city *(announcement of 502–49)* but you yourself go to the swineherd and stay there for the night *(announcement of Book 16).* Send the swineherd to report to Penelope your safe return *(announcement of 16.130–55).*

As so often, *Athena is an instrument in the hands of the narrator: he wants to move Telemachus to Eumaeus’ hut, in order to have him reunited with Odysseus (cf. Athena’s announcement in 13.397–415), but does not wish to forego the opportunity for a delayed recognition between father and son, and therefore cannot have Athena reveal the real reason why he should go there, Odysseus’ presence. Thus she must come up with other arguments. (i) To make him return to Ithaca, she uses an argument which is cleverly adapted to the anxieties of her addressee: his patrimony, which is actually being destroyed by the Suitors and potentially by Penelope after an impending remarriage; for Telemachus’ worries about his patrimony, cf., e.g., 1.250–1 and 2.48–9. (ii) To make him go to Eumaeus, she informs him that the Suitors want to kill him (28–32); in view of this, the youth had better not return to the palace directly, but rather stay with a trusted servant. Instructing the youth to send Eumaeus as messenger to Penelope (thereby removing him from the scene), she creates the right conditions for Odysseus to reveal himself to his son.

If we look at the picture which Athena paints of *Penelope in the course of this one speech, we see how it is determined by her rhetorical purposes. Wanting to convince Telemachus that the situation at home urgently requires his return, she does not hesitate to make use of a malicious allegation (16–23): not so much *Penelope’s remarriage as the suggestion that she would take Telemachus’ possessions with her; this suggestion is not backed up by the rest of the *Odyssey,* but will sound plausible to a young man whose relationship with his mother is strained (cf. 1.345–59n.). When she instructs him to send Eumaeus as messenger to Penelope (40–2), however, the suggestion is clearly that Penelope is worried about her son (note the ‘ethic’ dative of in 42, which underlines Penelope’s interest in her son’s well-being).

12 For the importance of Athena’s deprecation of the Suitors, calling them *ὑπερφίλος,* ‘overbearing’, cf. 1.224–9n.
16–17 For Eurymachus as the one most likely to win Penelope, cf. 1.367–424n.

28–32 Telemachus is told about – and the narratees reminded of – the Suitors’ ambush, but both are immediately reassured; cf. 4.658–74n. The reference is intended to create *suspense: though Telemachus is reassured here, he will be apprehensive in 300.

39 A chunk of explicit actorial characterization † of *Eumaeus.

43 For the recording of a god’s return ‘home’ (here: Olympus) after an intervention, cf. 6.41–7.

44–55 The little scene has mainly a characterizing function: *Telemachus’ haste to leave (i) reassures the narratees of the boy’s sense of responsibility (cf. Introduction) and (ii) illustrates his youthfully impatient temper; *Pisistratus, fulfilling his role as helper for the last time, has to remind Telemachus of the proper way to conclude a visit (after the offer of a guest-gift and ‘farewell’ speeches).

54–5 An instance of the *‘the guest will remember his host at home’ motif.


As in the case of Odysseus (cf. 13.36–63n.), the ‘departure’ scene mirrors elements of the ‘arrival’ scene, thus creating closure: the minor characters Eteoneus and Megapenthes make their curtain call (95 and 100, 103; cf. 4.22–38 and 4.11, respectively), Menelaus refers to the travels during which he collected riches (117–19; cf. 4.33–4), Helen offers a robe which she herself has woven (126; cf. 4.120–35, where she enters with her weaving gear), and brings up the subject of Telemachus’ marriage (126–7; cf. 4.3–14, where Helena and Menelaus celebrate the double marriage of their son and daughter), Menelaus’ riches trigger admiration (132; cf. 4.43–7), a hesitant Menelaus is anticipated by Helen (169–78; cf. 4.116–37), and a festive meal is held (93–8, 134–43; cf. 4.51–67).

56 For the ‘immediate’ sunrise, cf. 6.48–9n. This is the only time its speedy arrival has been announced in a speech (50).
Although almost every sunrise in the *Odyssey* is mentioned explicitly, the equally numerous instances of rising and dressing are described optionally (cf., e.g., 2.1–5: rising + dressing; 3.405: rising; 6.48–9: neither rising nor dressing). Here we find a unique combination of Menelaus rising and Telemachus (upon seeing him) dressing himself; this makes clear how Telemachus, eager to leave, has been waiting for Menelaus to stand up.

An instance of the *‘dressing’* type-scene: we only hear about clothing, not about the customary sandals and spear. The detail ‘hurryingly’ is unique; it illustrates Telemachus’ haste (cf. Introduction).

The exchange between Telemachus and Menelaus again shows us the youth’s eagerness to return (cf. Introduction), here in confrontation with *‘Menelaus’* over-zealous hospitality. He asks Menelaus to send him home, not referring to the fact that he has been urged to do so by a Dream, but presenting the request entirely as his own desire. Menelaus grants his request, backing up his acceptance with a host of general sayings (including the ‘I/you too would criticize/fight another who . . .’ motif in 69b–71a, for which cf. 6.286–8n., and a *gnomic utterance in 71b*). But he immediately asks the youth to stay a little longer, in order to receive guest-gifts (cf. Pisistratus in 51–2) and have a ‘farewell’ meal. His final offer to take Telemachus on a sightseeing tour, during which he could gather gifts, is typical for a man who himself spent seven years collecting riches, whilst at home the situation was seriously derailing: cf. 3.311–12 and contrast Nestor’s insistence that Telemachus should hurry home in 3.313–16. Declining Menelaus’ offer to go on a tour with him, Telemachus still does not refer to his Dream but now does repeat, in far less detail, the arguments which it had earlier employed to him (the threat to his patrimony and his own life). After his confrontation with Menelaus’ hospitality, Telemachus will later decide to avoid Nestor (194–221).

Menelaus no longer presses his guest, but starts to carry out his words in 75–7 (‘(A) wait till I get you guest-gifts and (B) I will order my wife to prepare a meal’) in reverse order †: (B’) he orders his wife (and female servants) to prepare a meal, tells Eteoneus to prepare a fire and roast the meat (92–8), and (A’) fetches and hands over guest-gifts (99–134).

The offer of guest-gifts forms part of the *‘visit’* type-scene; cf. for Telemachus’ visit to Sparta, 4.1–624n. In 4.587–619 Menelaus had already

---

2 Arend (1933: 98).
announced that he would give Telemachus guest-gifts and described them. In typical Homeric fashion (cf. 5.1–42n.), we find no back-reference (e.g., ‘now I will give you the gifts which I promised a month ago’), but a connection between the two scenes is established – implicitly – by verbatim repetition (15.113–19 = 4.613–19).

99–110 An instance of the *‘storeroom’ type-scene; cf. also Appendix F. We find the elements of (i) descent (99–100); (ii) the description of the store-room (99b); (iii) its content (101); (v) selection of gifts (102 + 106–8); (vi) history of one of the gifts (105b); and (viii) return (109–10).

100 An instance of the *‘not alone’ motif, whereby this time the attendants are not servants but Helen and Megapenthes, who will both play a role in the choosing of the gifts (103, 104ff.).

105–8 κάλλιστος (eleven times in direct speech, thrice in simple narrator-text) and μέγιστος (only here outside direct speech, where it occurs twenty-one times) are signs of the (implicit) embedded focalization † of Helen, indicating the criteria of her choice.

109–32 The offer of the gifts by Menelaus and Helen is accompanied by speeches, which explicitly refer to the act of giving (δῶσω: 114–15, δίδωμι: 125), and which at the same time function as *‘farewell’ speeches (cf. χαίρων: 128), containing the usual wish for well-being (here the safe return of the guest); the same combination of handing over a gift and taking leave in 8.406–11. Both Menelaus and Helen comment on their gift, the former stressing its special value by telling the history behind it (he got it on his way home from Troy), the latter explaining its function (the robe is to be worn by Telemachus’ future wife). One last time, we are shown Menelaus as the man who travelled and collected riches and Helen as the virtuous housewife, upholding the values of marriage.

125–8 An instance of the *‘a guest will remember his host at home’ motif.

132 The detail of Pisistratus admiring the gifts brings the fulfilment of Menelaus’ words in 75–6 (‘wait till you [Telemachus] have put the guest-gifts in your car, the beautiful ones, and have seen them with your own eyes’).

135–43 The type-scene of *‘the festive meal’³ consists of the following elements: (i) preparations, such as the setting of the tables, washing of hands,

---

mixing of the wine (135–7, and cf. 93–8: preparation of food); (ii) serving of bread, meat, and wine (138–41); (iii) consumption (142); and (iv) conclusion (143). Instances occur in 1.136–43; 4.52–68; 7.172–7; and 17.91–9 (and cf. the variant in 10.352–7 + 368–76). Meals are sometimes described in less detail (e.g., when they form part of a ‘sacrifice’ type-scene) or less formally (e.g., the two protracted meals of the Suitors in 17.180ff. and 20.122ff.).

144–83 An expanded instance of the *’departure by car’ type-scene:4 (i) Telemachus and Pisistratus harness the horses (144–5a); (ii) mount the chariot (145b); drive out of the portico (146); Menelaus runs after them with a cup of wine, ‘in order that they might leave after having offered libation’, and standing in front of the horses makes them stop (147–9; cf. II.24.283ff.); (there follows no actual libation); Menelaus and Telemachus speak words of farewell (150–9); there appears an eagle, which is interpreted by Helen as an omen (160–81); (iv) Telemachus whips up the horses (182a); and (v) the animals quickly move through the city (182b–183).

150–9 A second (cf. 109–32n.) set of *’farewell’ speeches (cf. χαίρετον: 151), this time by host and guest: Menelaus asks Telemachus to tell Nestor (about their stay with him). Telemachus promises to do so and adds an idiomatic form of asseveration, which consists in depicting a thing as certain by opposing it to a strong – but obviously impossible – wish (cf. 9.523–5n.): ‘if only I would be able, coming home and finding Odysseus there, to tell him about it, as surely as I now leave you having received hospitality and taking with me precious gifts’.

Telemachus will, in fact, break his promise to greet Nestor, when in 195–201 he decides to ‘skip’ Nestor on his voyage home. This is one of the places where we must grant the narrator ‘the flexible realism of permitting changing circumstances to overrule his characters’ earlier plans, especially when the original idea grows naturally out of the situation and is appropriate to the person conceiving it’.5 Other instances of characters changing their minds are found in 193–221, 503–7, 508–46; 16.69–89; and 19.1–52nn. In the present instance, Telemachus’ change of mind is well motivated by his eagerness to return home (cf. 200–1).

152 An instance of a *’parents and children’ comparison. This is the only place in Homer where reference is made to a fatherly relationship between

---

5 Woodhouse (1930: 162–4) and Fenik (1974: 106–11, quotation from 107).
Nestor and Menelaus; it seems no more than a rhetorical means of expressing Menelaus’ affection for the old man.

160–81 An instance of an *omen scene: (i) the portent, cued by Telemachus’ wish to find Odysseus at home (160–4); (ii) the observers’ – joyful – reaction (164–5); Pisistratus asks Menelaus for an interpretation, a unique detail, which seems to have been inserted mainly to call attention to the fact that it is (iii) Helen who, anticipating Menelaus (cf. 4.117–37n.), gives an exegesis of the omen (166–78); (iv) which Telemachus accepts (179–81).

This is the second in a series of four ‘bird’ omens which function as *prolepses of Odysseus’ return. As in 19.536–53, the Suitors are cast in the role of geese, Odysseus in that of the eagle. There is a discrepancy between the negative reaction of the ‘men and women’ (servants responsible for the geese?) and the positive one of Telemachus’ party; as in the case of similes, not all details of omen and context need correspond.

The narratees may note that what is presented by Helen in 177–8 as mere hypothesis, ‘or maybe he [Odysseus] is already at home and planning the Suitors’ destruction’, is in fact reality.

181 A hyperbolic variant of the *‘a guest will remember his host at home’ motif.

184–92 The verbatim repetition of 3.486–94 lulls the narratees into believing that Telemachus’ home voyage will be an exact copy of his outward voyage, including a stop at Nestor’s. In fact, however, the youth will spring a surprise on them.

193–221 Telemachus changes his mind and, although he promised Menelaus to greet Nestor, he now asks Pisistratus to help him avoid his father; cf. 150–9n. As in 43–55, in his eagerness to return home he wants to bypass the hospitality ritual, but this time he is conscious of this and carefully solicits Pisistratus’ cooperation. The latter does not react in words but immediately starts thinking and acting (an *‘indirect deliberation’ scene, of ‘how’ form, the outcome of which is narrated as it is performed). He moves the horses towards the coast, where Telemachus’ ship lies, puts the latter’s gifts on board and urges him to (A) embark and (B) exhort his companions immediately, before (C) he [Pisistratus] comes home and Nestor has a chance to come down to the beach and invite him [Telemachus] to his palace. The execution of his orders follows in reverse order †: (C’) Pisistratus returned home (215–16, δῶμαι τικανὲ ἐκέθεσαν), Telemachus (B’) exhorted his men to embark (217–19, ἐκέλευσεν = κέλευε).
and (A’) they embarked (220–1, εἰσβαίνων = ἀνάβαίνει). The narratees never hear about Nestor’s reaction to Telemachus’ surreptitious departure, whether indeed he is angry, as Pisistratus here envisages. This is one of a number of ‘open ends’ in the Odyssey; cf. 13.363–71n.

217–94 An instance of the *‘departure by ship’ type-scene, which is temporarily interrupted by the meeting with Theoclymenus:

217–21 (iv) the ship is made ready for the voyage and
  (vii) the crew go on board (split up into order and execution)
222–83 Theoclymenus approaches Telemachus and asks him to take him along
284–6a (vii) Telemachus and the passenger Theoclymenus go on board
286b (viii) the moorings are cast off
287–91 (xi) the sailing is prepared (split up into order and execution)
292–4 (x) Athena sends a favourable wind
  (this element is expanded here, because it is the execution of the goddess’ promise of 34–5)

222–3 Telemachus’ sacrifice (θυε) in 258 will turn out to be a libation. To sacrifice or offer libation before departure is not uncommon (cf. 147–9; 2.432–3 and 14.250–1), but it is not a regular element of a ‘departure by car/ship’ type-scene, nor has it been prepared for in Pisistratus’ speech of 209–14, which otherwise instructed Telemachus what to do. The detail seems to have been inserted with an eye to the meeting with Theoclymenus which follows: (i) despite his hurry to leave, Telemachus is detained for some time at the beach, and (ii) the seer will be inclined to put his trust in a man engaged in a religious activity (cf. his focalization of Telemachus’ sacrifice in 257–8 and his reference to it in 260–1).

222–83 The meeting between Telemachus and Theoclymenus evolves according to the structure of a *‘supplication’ scene: (i) suppliant’s approach (222–58; expanded with a lengthy introduction of Theoclymenus); (iii) ‘supplication’ speech (here doubled: 260–4 and 272–8; Theoclymenus, who is being pursued, first wants to find out who Telemachus is before asking him to take him along); and (iv) reaction of supplicandus (doubled: 265–70 and 279–86; instead of raising the suppliant, Telemachus takes his spear and stores it on the ship, i.e., treats him as his guest, cf. 1.121, 126–9, and gives him a seat on his ship).
Telemachus’ handling of Theoclymenus here and later shows his maturation (cf. Introduction): the youth no longer needs a mentor, but is himself capable of taking on responsibility for another person.

222–58 The narrator introduces the new character Theoclymenus in the form of a multiple ring-composition †, with his genealogy at the centre:

A  Telemachus was sacrificing (222–3a),
B  when a man approached him (223b),
C  a fugitive, a seer, descendant from Melampus (224–5).
D  Genealogy from Melampus until Polyphides (226–55).
C’  It was his [Polyphides’] son, Theoclymenus (256),
B’  who then came to Telemachus (257a).
A’  And he found him sacrificing (257b–258).

Such a long piece of explicit narratorial characterization † is unusual (the only parallel is Thersites in II. 2.212–23), but still typically Homeric in that it only provides information which is relevant for the role which Theoclymenus⁶ is to play. His descent from the illustrious seers Melampus and Amphiaraus (and cf. the speaking name Mantius: 242) prepares for his interpreting for Telemachus the ‘bird’ omen upon arrival on Ithaca (531–4); prophesying to Penelope that Odysseus is already present on Ithaca (17.152–61); and predicting to the Suitors their impending slaughter (20.350–70). After this, he goes to the house of Piraeus (20.371–2) and is not heard from again. It should be noted that Theoclymenus nowhere reveals his name or his status as a seer; cf. the consistent references to him as ‘stranger’ (536, 542; 17.163; 20.360). This may explain why his prophecies are given a lukewarm reaction (by Telemachus and Penelope, who merely express the wish that they will become true) or are even rejected (by the Suitors). Only the narratees know the authority on which his prophecies are based, and will fully appreciate the folly of the Suitors who laugh at him.

223 For Theoclymenus’ abrupt entrance onto the stage, cf. 18.1–8n.
224 For the ‘exile after homicide’ motif, cf. 13.258–71n.

τηλεδαπός, ‘from a far away country’, belongs to the character-

language†: only here is it found outside direct speech (where it occurs seven times). It seems used by the narrator to increase the pathos of Theoclymenus’ fate; he is forced to stray far from his country (cf. 276).

226–55 For Homeric genealogies, cf. 7.54–74n. As in Il. 6.152–211, we find a combination of genealogy (241–55) and anecdote about one of the illustrious forebears (226–40).

226–40 For this anecdote from the life of Melampus, cf. 11.287–97n. It is presented here in the form of an epic regression †:

E Melampus used to live in Pylos but came to another city (226–8a),
D fleeing from Neleus (228b–229),
B who had confiscated his goods, while he was held captive in Phylace (230–2),
A because of his promise to get Iphiclus’ cattle in exchange for Neleus’ daughter (233–4).
B’ He escaped from Pylos and returned to Pylos with the cattle (235–6a),
D’ took his revenge on Neleus (236b–237a),
B’ and married the woman [Nereus’ daughter] off to his brother (237b–238a).
E’ But he came to another city, Argos, where he became king (238b–240).

260–4 Theoclymenus’ first *supplication’ speech contains the usual reference to the speech-act of supplication (λισσόμαι), request (‘tell me your name and origin’), and reason why supplicandus should accept the request (as a fugitive, he can do no more than appeal to things which are sacrosanct or dear to his addressee: the libation, the god to whom Telemachus offers a libation, whose identity Theoclymenus of course does not know and hence refers to as *δεσμων, Telemachus’ life, and that of his friends).

267–70 Telling the stranger who he is, Telemachus adds that he thinks his father is dead, though he had learnt from Menelaus’ story that Odysseus is still alive (4.555–60). It is typical of Odysseus’ philoi to remain pessimistic, despite positive news about him; cf. 1.353–5n.

When we compare Telemachus’ present self-identification with that in 1.215–16, we see that he now acknowledges that Odysseus is his father and, like Penelope (in 19.315) and Laertes (in 24.289), uses the nostalgic εἰ ποτ’ ἐπὶ (γε), ‘if ever he (really) existed’ motif in connection with him. The motif
is used of things of the past which – unfortunately – have changed, or of people who have died; cf. Helen’s marriage to Menelaus (Il. 3.180); Nestor’s youthful prowess (Il. 11.762); and Hector (Il. 24.426).

272–8 The narratees have been prepared by the narrator (in 224) for the information which Theoclymenus gives here to Telemachus. Coming from this character, the information becomes an argument: Theoclymenus recounts his predicament, in order to make clear that he is urgently in need of help, corroborating his request by stressing the similarity between his own fate and that of Telemachus and Odysseus (‘so I too am out of my country’).

284–6 Comparing these lines with 2.416–18, one sees Telemachus’ development: then Athena led and he took a place next to her, but now it is Telemachus who enters the ship first and gives his guest a seat; for the latter’s position next to the ‘host’, cf. 1.130–5n.

295–300 The *sea voyage is described in unique geographical detail (contrast the single, uninformative line devoted to the voyage out, 2.434), so as to create *suspense: Telemachus safely passes the mainland, but then he sets sail for the islands and starts worrying about whether he will be able to escape death (i.e., the Suitors, who are lying in ambush for him). At this very moment, and with Telemachus’ worries fresh in the narratees’ minds, the narrator takes leave of him (until 495), creating a cliffhanger, despite the fact that the narratees have been repeatedly assured that Telemachus will come home safely (cf. 4.658–74n.).

301–495 The narrator briefly switches to Odysseus in Eumaeus’ hut; cf. Introduction. The scene may be seen as an instance of the ‘fill-in’ technique †: it occupies the time taken up by Telemachus’ voyage home. In this particular case, the technique allows the narrator to gloss over the question of how exactly Telemachus manages to escape the attention of the Suitors (Athena had instructed him to steer away from the islands and sail by night, but the Suitors cruise the seas even at night: 16.366–77); when we return to him he has simply finished his voyage. For once, a storyline in the background does contain an important development; cf. Appendix B. When they find out that he has managed to return safely, the Suitors can only speculate on how he managed to do so; cf. 16.356–70n. In view of this sleight of hand executed by the narrator, the narratees may feel fobbed off by the cliffhanger in 300, which promised more excitement than they actually get.

301–2 The change of scene † is abrupt. According to the ‘continuity of
time’ principle †, the same amount of time has elapsed for Odysseus and Eumaeus as for Telemachus; hence while we left them asleep (14.523–33), we now find them engaged in their evening meal (the sun having set in 296).

304–46 For the second time (cf. 14.459–532) Odysseus *tests Eumaeus, i.e., his disposition towards strangers; again, the narratees are informed beforehand of what Odysseus intends to accomplish with his test, via his embedded focalization † (305–6; shifter ἃ… ἃ† optatives): he expresses a desire to go to town and mix with the Suitors, to see whether Eumaeus will urge him to stay with him (the desired alternative) or let him go. Eumaeus again passes the test, urging him to stay (άλλα μέν’: 335 ἃ… μεῖναι… κέλευσο: 305 and cf. Odysseus’ recapitulation ἐπει… μεῖναι… μὲ ἕνωγας: 346).

His test also allows Odysseus to further rehearse his role as a beggar who is forced to roam around (312, 342–5), beg for his food (312, 316), and do menial tasks (cf. 317–24n.).

The scene is an instance of the *‘rejected suggestion’ device: Odysseus’ – feigned – plan to go to town next morning is rejected by Eumaeus, but will in fact be executed the day after (which starts in 17.1). Thus 307–24 is a *‘table of contents’ speech, which announces the contents of Books 17–19: Odysseus will be escorted by an ‘excellent guide’ (Eumaeus) to town (Book 17), bring news to Penelope (Book 19), and mix with the Suitors, begging for food (Books 17 and 18).

305 The embedded focalization triggers character-language †: ἐνδυκέως, ‘kindly’ (sixteen times in direct speech, here in embedded focalization, and three times in simple narrator-text).

307–39 The exchange displays the reverse order †:

‘the beggar’  A’ I want to go to town, in order not to wear out the resources of you and your men.

B I could meet the Suitors and work for them, the kind of work meaner men do for the noble.

Eumaeus B’ Do not aim at a confrontation with the hubristic Suitors; it might mean your death.

Moreover, their servants are not like that (sc. old and shabby like you), but young and well groomed are the ones who do work for them. (‘catch-word’ technique †: ὑποδρόωσιν picks up παραδρόωσι: 324)

A’ Stay here, since your presence does not bother me or any of my men.
317–24 This is the first instance of the ‘labour’ motif: Odysseus declares himself prepared to do household jobs for the Suitors, such as tending the fire, splitting wood, and waiting at the table. In 17.18–21 he explains that he has to beg in the city, because he is too old to do farmwork. In 17.187 Eumaeus sighs that he would have preferred ‘the beggar’ to stay at the farm as stableman. In 17.223–8 the goatherd Melanthius suggests that ‘the beggar’ is too lazy to do farmwork, such as sweeping out the pens or feeding the animals. When Eurymachus makes a similar claim in 18.357–64 (‘the beggar’ is too lazy to collect stones for a wall or plant trees), Odysseus is provoked and reacts by advertising his stamina as mower and plougher (18.366–86). In 18.317–19 he offers to take care of the lights and does so in 18.343–4. In 19.27–8 Telemachus uses the argument that ‘the beggar’ has to work for his bread as an excuse to let him stay with him in the megaron.

321–4 For the expressive ‘no other could vie with X in . . .’ motif, cf. 4.78–81; 8.371 (abbreviated); 19.285–6; 23.125–6; and Il. 3.221–3 (and cf. the variant in Il. 9.389).


329 For the importance of Eumaeus’ negative qualification of the Suitors’ behaviour as hubris, cf. 1.224–9n.

330–4 Like their masters, the servants of the Suitors are young; cf. 2.324n.

337–9 For the second time (cf. 14.508–17n.) Eumaeus anticipates the possible arrival of Telemachus, which this time the narratees know is close at hand.


343–5 The narratees, knowing the ‘beggar’s true identity, may note how apt his words ‘there is nothing worse for mortals than wandering’ (*gnomic utterance) and ‘we suffer because of our wretched belly’ are for Odysseus as well; cf. 13.429–38n. For the motif of the ‘accursed belly’, cf. 7.215–21n.

346–484 Following Athena’s instructions in 13.411 (to ask Eumaeus about everything), Odysseus now inquires after (A) his mother and (B) his father (346–50), having earlier asked after the master of the house (14.115–20) and having been spontaneously informed by Eumaeus concerning the Suitors (14.81–95) and Telemachus (14.174–84). Odysseus heard about the poor state of Laertes in the Underworld (11.187–96), but that was seven years ago and it is appropriate to ask about the old man again.
It is more strange for him to ask after his mother Anticlea, since he knows she is dead (11.152–203). The questions may be seen as part of his role as stranger, but perhaps the narratorial motivation † has simply overruled the actorial motivation †: the narrator wants to make Eumaeus talk about Anticlea and hence about his youth, in order to arrive at the story of his life.

Eumaeus answers Odysseus’ questions in reverse order †, first (B’) dealing with Laertes (352–7), then (A’) with Anticlea (358–60). This allows him to add a few remarks about his own youth, in which Anticlea played an important role (361–70). He ends by contrasting this happy past, in which he used to talk to his mistress and was kindly treated by her, with the gloomy present, where he no longer receives kind words or deeds from his new mistress, Penelope, ever since the plague of the Suitors fell upon her (371–9); a similar contrast, between former and new masters, was voiced by him in 14.59–68.

In his answer Odysseus does not respond to Eumaeus’ remarks about Penelope and the Suitors, but harks back to the swineherd’s words concerning his youth (cf. 363–6), asking him to recount the story of his life (381–8), parts of which have already been alluded to by Eumaeus in 14.142–3. Eumaeus complies in a leisured speech (390–484). His story, which takes place after a meal and is intended to delight (cf. 391) is a variant of the songs of professional singers.

The narratees may admire the economical way in which the narrator distributes his information:7 the narratees have already been amply informed about Penelope and the Suitors (and will be informed again in the next Book) and hence that subject is skipped here; although Odysseus presumably already knows the story of his servant, it is nevertheless told for the sake of the narratees; cf. also 403–84n.

348 For the ‘left behind’ motif, cf. 11.68n.
353–7 This is one of a series of references to *Laertes, which prepare for his appearance in Book 24. We find (i) the stock element of his miserable old age, and (ii) the new, climactic element that he wishes he were dead, because of the absence of Odysseus and the death of his wife.
357–60 Eumaeus’ account of Anticlea’s death agrees with her own story in 11.197–203.
363–70 This is the only place where we hear about Odysseus’ sister

---

7 Besslich (1966: 36–9).
Ctimene. Her sole function is to serve as Eumaeus’ friend. As in the case of the other faithful servant Euryclea, whom Laertes honoured ‘as much as his own wife’ (1.432–3), the narrator takes care to connect Eumaeus to Odysseus’ family: Anticlea ‘honoured him only slightly less’ [than Ctimene].

388 The expression ‘to the house of this man’ is an instance of ambiguity †: for ‘the beggar’s addressee, Eumaeus, it refers (anaphorically) to the Odysseus they have been talking about, owner of the palace and the one who bought him (cf. 14.115–16), but Odysseus himself and the narratees may take it to refer (deictically) to the Odysseus who is speaking. This type of ambiguity is characteristic of the second half of the *Odyssey*; cf. 19.358n.

390–402 As is usual in the case of a long narrative, the actual narration is preceded by an *emotional preamble, here marked off by ring-composition (402≈390). While Odyssean speakers about to embark on a tale usually stress their reluctance to recall the mass of sorrowful events to be recounted, Eumaeus stresses the ‘delight’ (τερπ-: 391, 393, 399, 400) which protracted storytelling offers both teller and listener.

For the metanarrative relevance of the idea that afterwards, when all has ended well, a person can enjoy telling the story of his woes, cf. 8.83–92n.

392–4 For the idea that there is a time for sleep and for talk, cf. 11.373–6n.

398–400 An instance of the *significant use of the dual: Eumaeus stresses the similarity in fate between himself and the ‘stranger’.*

403–84 Eumaeus counters the account of ‘the stranger’s life (14.192–359) with his own story; the two tales share the topics of kidnapping by Phoenician pirates and loss of status. The swineherd’s story features a female servant who has an affair with one of the Phoenicians and therefore betrays her master and helps to kidnap his son; its ‘key’ function † therefore might be to alert the narratees to the role of the bad female servants in Odysseus’ household, who are sleeping with the Suitors, betraying their former master Odysseus, and ill-treating their unrecognized master, ‘the beggar’. Its length is achieved by the lavish insertion of speeches, the use of a doublet † (the fate of the Phoenician slave woman, who is the daughter of a rich man but after being kidnapped spends her days in slavery: 425–9,

---

echoes that of Eumaeus himself), and the combination of announcement and execution (cf. 430–84n.).

Eumaeus’ royal background explains his position as *primus inter pares* amongst the herdsmen (cf. 14.7–10, 449–52) and his noble treatment of ‘the stranger’. The narrator discloses this vital piece of biographical information at this late stage of the meeting between Odysseus and the swineherd, in order to turn Eumaeus into an instance of the *‘outward appearance versus inner quality’* theme: he looks like a simple swineherd but is in fact the son of a king.

Eumaeus’ story is a *first-person story, starting ab ovo* (cf. 1.10n.). He breaches the restrictions of this type of narration in 415–60, where he recounts the dealings, including speeches, between the Phoenicians and the slave woman, events at which he was not present himself and of which he was unaware at the time (cf. ‘in my innocence’: 470), without explaining his knowledge (e.g., by saying that he heard about all this later). The reason for this breach is the same as in the two similar cases in Odysseus’ *Apologue* (cf. Introduction to 9):10 telling the story omnisciently, he is better able to make clear the depravity of the Phoenicians and the slave woman, who execute a meticulously premeditated plan.

403–14 The atmosphere of Eumaeus’ description of his homeland resembles that of Odysseus’ description of Ithaca in 9.21–8 (compare especially 405 ‘not a very populous island, but yet a good one’ with 9.27 ‘a rugged place, but yet a good nurse of men’); both men are nostalgically describing what they have not seen for many years. In the case of Eumaeus, his homeland even has fairytale qualities, since, as the *‘description by negation’* technique points up, it knows *neither* hunger *nor* illness.

403–6 An instance of the *‘there is a place X . . .’* motif. The narrative is resumed with the typical ἔνθα, ‘there’ (415).

415–60 The meeting between the slave woman and the Phoenician pirates is a special instance of the *‘stranger meets with local inhabitant’* story-pattern: the Phoenician pirates, who have just landed at the coast of Syria, meet (in this case: sleep with) a local (in this case: imported local) inhabitant, the daughter (in this case: slave) of the ruler of the country. The typical escort to the palace takes place in stages: the woman points out the

palace to the pirates (424–9), then returns herself to it (454), one pirate following a year later (459).

416 An instance of a seed †: the ‘adornments’ here mentioned will play a role in 459–63.

417–18 An instance of the *‘there is a person X . . .’ motif.

430–84 The greater part of Eumaeus’ story consists of the announcement of a plan in speech and the narration of its execution, whereby, unlike the usual Homeric practice, we find scarcely any verbatim repetition:

Plan
F (pirate) Do you want to go back to Phoenicia (430–3)?
   (woman) Yes, swear that you will bring me back unharmed (434–8).
A Don’t talk about this with your men, but buy new cargo for your ship (439–45).
B When your ship is loaded (446),
C report this to me (447).
D I will come with gold and the young son of my master (448–52),
E whom you may sell for much money (452–3).

Execution
A’ During a year they bought much cargo (455–6).
B’ When the ship was full (457),
C’ they sent a messenger. A man came to my father’s house, who showed my mother a precious necklace and who gave a silent sign to the slave woman (458–63).
D’ She took my hand and led me outside, taking with her three goblets. I followed her to the ship and we set sail (464–75).
F’ After six days the slave woman was hit by an arrow of Artemis and thrown into the sea by the pirates (476–81).
   (thus she does not come home unharmed)
E’ Laertes bought Eumaeus (482–4).

485–92 In his *reaction to Eumaeus’ story ‘the beggar’ declares himself moved (as the latter was by his own tale: 486–7 ≈ 14.361–2), congratulates him on the fact that all has ended well for him (he has come to a gentle master and leads a good life), and contrasts this happy ending with his own
as yet unfinished odyssey. The narratees may note (i) the ambiguity † of Odysseus praising himself in 489–91 (for ἐπισκ. cf. 14.138–9; for his generosity, cf. 14.62–5) and (ii) the aptness of πολλὰ βρότων ἐπὶ ἀστείς ἀλώμενος for Odysseus’ himself: cf. 1.2–3: πλάγχθη . . . πολλῶν . . . ἀνθρώπων ἰδεῖν ἀστέα; cf. 13.429–38n.

493–7 The change of scene †, from Eumaeus’ hut to Telemachus, lacks correspondence, but is prepared for by the narrator in the form of an appositive summary †.

In keeping with the ‘continuity of time’ principle †, the same amount of time has elapsed for Telemachus as for Odysseus and Eumaeus. Hence, when the narrator picks up the youth’s storyline, which in 296–300 he dropped at the moment of sunset, Telemachus has completed the one-night (cf. 2.434) voyage from Pylos to Ithaca. For the smoothing over of the question of how Telemachus escaped the attention of the cruising Suitors, cf. 301–495n.

494–5 As foreseen in 393–4, Eumaeus and ‘the stranger’ have spent most of the night talking. For the ‘quick’ sunrise, cf. 6.48–9n.

495–9 Telemachus lands on the beach, in accordance with the Dream’s instruction (36: ‘as soon as you have reached the beach of Ithaca’); not until 16.322–6 will his ship (without Telemachus himself) land in the harbour. The elements of the *‘landing’ type-scene are divided over the two passages:

### Book 15

(i–ii) arrival and entering the harbour (322–4)  
(iii) furling the sails (495–7a)  
(iv) rowing to anchorage (497b)  
(v) lowering the anchor-stones (498a)  
(vi) tying the moorings (498b)  
(vii) disembarking (499)  

### Book 16

(i–ii) arrival and entering the harbour (322–4)  
(iii) furling the sails (495–7a)  
(iv) rowing to anchorage (497b)  
(v) lowering the anchor-stones (498a)  
(vi) tying the moorings (498b)  
(vii) disembarking (499)  
(viii) unloading (326)
503–7 Telemachus now turns to the execution of Athena’s instructions in 37–9. He orders his companions to go to the city with his ship, and announces that he will go to ‘his lands and the herdsmen’ (he uses a general plural and does not reveal that he is going to Eumaeus; though not ordered to maintain secrecy, *Telemachus displays his characteristic talent for dissimulation), will himself come to the city that evening (in fact, the Dream had instructed him to spend the night with Eumaeus, cf. 40, and this is what he will do; another instance of dissimulation), and the next day will offer his friends a meal to thank them for joining him on his trip (he will never give the meal promised here, because after the meeting with his father he will be occupied with other concerns. An instance of a *character changing his mind).

508–46 Telemachus’ set of instructions did not mention Theoclymenus and the latter now asks what is to happen to him. The scene seems to have been inserted mainly because of the omen which it features, which gives *Theoclymenus an opportunity to show his worth:

Theoclymenus Where am I to go, (A) to the house of an Ithacan or (B) to your house (508–11)?
Telemachus Normally, (B’) I would take you to my home, but (A’) in the present circumstances it is better to go to the house of *Eurymachus. He is the most prominent of the Ithacans, the one most eager to marry Penelope, and take over Odysseus’ position as king.
(Telemachus’ description of Eurymachus, which started factually, gradually becomes emotional)
Perhaps Zeus will punish him before he can marry her (512–24).
(This utterance triggers an *‘omen’ scene)

narrator (i) Portent (525–8).

Theoclymenus (iii) (exegesis) There will be no other kings of Ithaca than your family (529–34). (i.e., Eurymachus’ aspirations to take over Odysseus’ position will be in vain)

Telemachus (iv) (acceptation) I hope your words will come true (535–8).

Telemachus Piraeus, please take the stranger with you to your house (539–43).
(he changes his mind about sending Theoclymenus to Eurymachus; cf. 150–9n.)

Piraeus Even if you stay away a long time, I will take care of this man (544–6).

The *‘two consecutive speeches by one speaker’ device underlines how Telemachus turns from Theoclymenus to Piraeus and *changes his mind, and allows for the narrator’s introduction of Piraeus.
513–17 As in Book 1, Telemachus is embarrassed because the presence of the Suitors in the palace prevents him from acting as a perfect host. His dilemma as to how to deal with a guest while he is away and his mother ‘exiled’ to her room forms an anticipatory doublet † of his predicament with respect to ‘the beggar’/Odysseus in 16.68–89.

521–2 For the Suitors’ motives in wooing Penelope, cf. 1.249–51n.

525–38 This is the third ‘bird’ omen which foreshadows Odysseus’ return and his revenge on the Suitors (here formulated in terms of the continued reign of the Laertiad family); cf. 2.143–207n. The fact that the bird is a falcon, ‘swift messenger of Apollo’ (this qualification is found only here), may be relevant in that (i) Apollo is the god of prophecy and this bird-sign is interpreted by a professional seer, and (ii) the Suitors will be killed during a festive day for Apollo; cf. 20.276–8n.

Theoclymenus’ words are not only prophetic but also form a fitting conclusion to the Telemachy: he confirms what the narratees will have been able to work out for themselves, that Telemachus has proven himself a fitting heir to the throne. He is now ready to be reunited with his father.

539–41 The minor character Piraeus is introduced by explicit characterization †, first by the narrator, who calls him a ‘reliable companion’ (only here in the Odyssey, as against seven times in the Iliad), then by Telemachus in the first two lines of his speech. In this way, both Theoclymenus and the narratees are assured that he is the right man to take care of the seer. Piraeus will enter the story again in 17.71–84 and 20.372, both times in his role as host.

550–2 An instance of a *‘dressing’ type-scene, featuring sandals and spear.

553–7 The narrator records the execution of what was announced in speech in 503–4 (‘(A) You sail the ship to the city and (B) I will go to the herdsman’) in parallel order †: (A) They started sailing to the city and (B’) Telemachus sped to the swineherd’s hut. This order allows the narrator to stay with Telemachus; he will return to his companions in 16.351ff.

553–4 The *‘X acted as Y had ordered’ motif allows the narrator to refer to Telemachus emphatically as ‘dear son of divine Odysseus’, by way of preparation of the reunion to follow.

555–7 For the ‘visit’ type-scene begun here, cf. 16.1–153n.

556–7 Another chunk of explicit narratorial characterization † of *Eumaeus. The narrator allows himself the use of character-language †: ἐσθλὸς, ‘noble’, ‘competent’ (fifty-two times in speech, twenty-eight times
in simple narrator-text, but hardly ever, as here, predicatively), ἕπτος, ‘gentle’ (twenty-three times in speech, twice in simple narrator-text: here and II. 4.218). Eumaeus triggers the periphrastic denomination † ἐνάκτεσιν, ‘his masters’ (cf. 14.36n; the plural anticipates the next scene, which will bring together the servant and his two masters).
BOOK SIXTEEN

This book covers the thirty-eighth day (cf. Appendix A), which is filled mainly by the reunion of Odysseus and Telemachus (an instance of the 'delayed recognition' story-pattern) and their planning of the revenge on the Suitors, which continues the planning of Athena and Odysseus in Book 13. After that, the narrator switches to the palace, for 'the Suitors in conference' and 'Penelope leaves her room' scenes.

The subject of the reunion of father and son is underscored by the narrator through his use of periphrastic denomination †: more than in any other book, Odysseus is referred to as 'father' (42, 192, 214, 221), Telemachus as 'son' (11, 178, 190, 308, 339, 452).1

1–153 An instance of the *(overnight) 'visit' type-scene, with a number of effective adaptations:2 Telemachus (i) sets off (15.555a); (ii) arrives at his destination (15.555b–557); instead of having him (iii) find Eumaeus, the narrator inserts an abrupt change of scene † (16.1–3), so that he can present (iv) Telemachus’ reception from the standpoint of Eumaeus and Odysseus (4–48);3 (v) meal (49–54); and (vi) after-dinner conversation (55–153). From now on, Telemachus no longer behaves as a guest nor Eumaeus as a host; thus when Eumaeus returns to his hut in the evening, he finds Telemachus and Odysseus busy preparing dinner (452–4), and afterwards the three simply go to sleep, without any talk about preparing beds (480–1).

As earlier, when Eumaeus took care of 'the stranger' (cf. Introduction to 14), his humble but warm hospitality is stressed: he improvises a seat for Telemachus out of green brushwood and fleece (47; cf. 14.49–51), serves the

3 Friedrich (1975: 33) and Richardson (1990: 117).
leftovers of the day before (50), ‘zealously’ piles the bread in baskets (51; cf. the bare version in 1.147), and mixes the wine in a wooden bowl (52; cf. 14.78).

1–3 The narrator, who left Odysseus and Eumaeus at dawn (15.495), now returns to them as they are busy preparing breakfast ‘at the time of sunrise’. The ‘continuity of time’ principle † is therefore not observed, since the same amount of time should have elapsed for them as for Telemachus, who since sunrise has disembarked, seen an omen, and walked to Eumaeus’ hut. The reason for this breach of narrative convention could be that the narrator wants to include the crucial detail of Odysseus and Eumaeus sending away the other herdsmen, which means that the stage is now empty except for the protagonists; cf. 24.222–5n.

4–219 The reunion of Odysseus and Telemachus is an instance of the *delayed recognition* story-pattern (*most important identifications in the Odyssey unfold slowly after elaborate preparation, delays, hints, ironical foreshadowing and unexpected detours*). Other instances are: the recognition of Telemachus by Menelaus and Helen (4.69–167n.); of Odysseus by the Phaeacians (Introduction to 7); of Odysseus by Polyphemus (9.195–542n.); of Ithaca by Odysseus (13.187–358n.); of Odysseus by Eumaeus (Introduction to 14) and Philoetius (20.185–240n.); of Odysseus by the dog Argus (17.291–327n.); of Odysseus by the Suitors (Introduction to 17); of Odysseus by Penelope (Introduction to 19); of Odysseus in the tale of ‘the stranger’ by Penelope (19.185–257n.); of Odysseus by Euryclea (19.317–507n.); and of Odysseus by Laertes (24.216–349n.).

This story-pattern usually combines a number of the following elements: (i) the other person(s) spontaneously start(s) talking about the unrecognized person (or landscape or dog) in his presence or about a subject which is dear to him (cf. 4.104–12n.); (ii) the unrecognized person *tests or is tested; (iii) the unrecognized person tells a *lying tale; (iv) the unrecognized person is recognized or reveals himself (*anagnorisis*); in the latter case, (v) he often meets with scepticism (13.324–8; 16.192–200; 19.215–17; 22.45; 23.11–24, 36, 59–68, 81–4, 107–8; 24.328); which he (vi) overcomes with *tokens*,

---

SEMATA; then follows (vii) the final reunion, which is accompanied by embraces, kisses, and tears (cf. 13.354; 16.214–19; 17.303–5; 19.249–51, 471–2; 21.222–5; 23.207–40; and 24.320, 345–9).

The story-pattern, which is handled with great virtuosity by the narrator (in particular in the many instances involving the disguised Odysseus on Ithaca), is a powerful instrument of dramatic irony, suspense, and emotion. Odysseus reveals himself in a carefully planned order: to Telemachus at an early stage, because he needs a partner for his secret scheming; to Eumaeus and Philoetius just prior to the killing of the Suitors, because he needs comrades-in-arms; to the Suitors at the moment he executes his revenge on them; to Penelope after the revenge has been accomplished, because he is not certain she can keep a secret and wants to spare her the anxieties of the fighting (cf. Introduction to 19). He is recognized immediately by his dog Argus and prematurely by Euryclea. The series of recognitions of Odysseus punctuate the process of his internal return, the legitimation and reintegration of ‘the man’ of the proem as father, master, king, husband, and son.5

In the case of Telemachus’ delayed recognition of Odysseus, we find (i) in 31–5; a variant of (iii) in 63–7 (instead of ‘the stranger’ telling a lying tale, Eumaeus repeats in summarized form the lying tale which Odysseus had earlier told him); and (iv)–(vii) in 155–219.

4–48 Telemachus’ reception is of a special nature: (b) instead of the host, it is his dogs that catch sight of the visitor and fawn over him (4–10); (a) the visitor stands in the doorway (11–12a); (c) the surprised host rises from his seat (12b–14); (d) instead of taking the guest by the hand, he kisses him (14–21; extended by a simile); (e) speaks words of welcome, which, because we are dealing with a meeting between intimates, develops into a brief conversation (22–39); he takes his guest’s spear (40); (f) the guest enters (41; instead of being led inside by his host, Telemachus, as Eumaeus’ master, simply enters of his own accord); and (g) is given a seat (42–8; this element shows us Odysseus in his role of beggar, deferentially offering his own seat to the young master; Telemachus, declining that seat, immediately giving proof of his nobility; and Eumaeus, once again, cf. 14.49–51, improvising a seat, giving proof of his humble but affectionate hospitality).

The first phase of the reception of Telemachus runs parallel to that of

Odysseus, with Eumaeus’ *watchdogs reacting to the arrival of the visitor (cf. 14.29–36) and an alarmed/surprised Eumaeus dropping what he is holding in his hand (cf. 14.34).

The narrator very effectively recounts Telemachus’ arrival through the eyes of Odysseus, in the form of a – unique – prolonged and complex instance of the *‘action-perception-reaction’ pattern: (action) the dogs fawn over Telemachus (4–5a) – (perception) Odysseus notes the dogs’ fawning and hears footsteps (5b–6) – and (reaction) verbalizes his perception to Eumaeus, suggesting that the person arriving might be a companion or acquaintance (7–10). While he is still speaking (11a), (new perception) the newcomer stands in the doorway and turns out to be not a companion or acquaintance, but ‘his own dear son’ (11b–12a; the *‘sympathetic dative’ ɵl suggests Odysseus’ implicit focalization †). Odysseus immediately recognizes his son, as he will immediately recognize all members of his oïkos; no delayed recognitions for him! In the case of Telemachus, who was a baby when he left (cf. 4.112), his recognition is facilitated by the fact that from 13.411–15 on he knew he could expect his son. At this climactic moment, as we await Odysseus’ new reaction, the narrator switches to Eumaeus, who actually greets Telemachus as if he were his own son (12b–26; cf. the ‘father–son’ simile in 17–21; ‘dear child’ in 25; the recurrence of 15 in 17.39 and 19.417, where Penelope kisses her son, of 23–4 in 17.41–2, where Penelope addresses her son). This fatherly relationship had been carefully prepared for in 14.174–84n. and is entirely natural; yet it is subtly employed here to suggest the emotions which the narratees may suspect are raging inside Odysseus, but which he has to repress (cf. 190–1).

4–5 An instance of the *‘watchdog’ motif. This time Eumaeus’ ùlakòmòroi watchdogs, ‘famed for their barking’(?), do not bark; for the negation of epithets, cf. Il. 9.10–12 and 24.4–5. The negated narration calls attention to the contrast with the arrival of ‘the outsider’ Odysseus in 14.29–36 (when they did bark and almost bit him).

11 For the phenomenon that a speaker has not yet finished speaking, when something else happens, cf. 351 and 10.540; it suggests a quick succession of events.

12–14 For amazement at the sight of a visitor, cf. 10.63; 24.101–4, 391–2; Il. 9.193; 11.777; 24.483–4.

14 For the periphrastic denomination † ãvâκτος, cf. 14.36.

17–21 This complex simile †, one of a series of *‘parents and children’
comparisons, fulfils several functions. (i) It illustrates Eumaeus’ loving greeting of Telemachus (ἠγατζεντηκύς(σ)ευ) and adds weight to this emotionally charged moment. (ii) It is expressive of Eumaeus’ fatherly feelings towards Telemachus (cf. 4–48n.): he is ‘well disposed’ to him (cf. 15.557), has ‘suffered distresses over him’ (cf. 14.174–84), and in his anxious perception, Telemachus has been away for ‘ten’ years and to a ‘far away country’. (iii) It suggests Odysseus’ unexpressed feelings, when he finally sees his ‘only’ (μονόν; cf. 120) and ‘beloved’ (?; the exact meaning of τηλυγετος is unknown) son again; cf. 4–48n. In this respect the simile is an excellent illustration of ‘narrative through imagery’: ‘the main function of a simile is not to illustrate something already mentioned in the narrative, but to add things which are not mentioned, in a different medium: imagery.’ (iv) It is an instance of a *‘role reversal’ simile: the son in the simile is cast in the role of Odysseus, who has wandered for ‘ten’ years on his way home from a ‘faraway country’, while ‘the distresses’ which the father in the simile has suffered on account of his son correspond to those of Telemachus during the absence of his father (cf. 4.164 and 16.188–9). This role reversal underscores the similarity between the experiences of Odysseus and Telemachus; cf. Introduction to 1.

The short comparison ‘as if he had escaped from death’ represents Eumaeus’ embedded focalization †: he knew about the Suitors’ ambush of Telemachus (cf. 14.180–2), and in his ensuing speech he will say that he thought he would never see him again (23–4); cf. Il. 24.328 (Priam’s φιλοι are crying for him ‘as if he were marching towards his death’).

Instead of a single ‘welcome’ speech, we find a tripartite conversation. It starts with Eumaeus’ *‘welcome’ speech (23–9): greeting (which takes the special form of ‘I thought I would never see you again’ = 17.41–2 and cf. 13.356–60); invitation to enter; instead of the customary promise of a meal and announcement of the after-dinner conversation, Eumaeus announces that he will enjoy himself looking at Telemachus, whom he sees so seldom, since the boy prefers to look at the Suitors (for Eumaeus’ feeling of being neglected by the royal family, cf. 15.374–9). Telemachus, sensing the swineherd’s feelings of neglect, reacts with pacifying words (31–5): he has come especially to see him (a white lie; Telemachus had been instructed by Athena to go to Eumaeus to hide from the Suitors: 15.36–42.

The narratees may note the dramatic irony † of Telemachus’ white lie, because they know that Athena has in fact sent him to the hut to see Odysseus) and to inquire after his mother, to find out whether she is still loyal (cf. Athena’s insinuations in 15.14–26). Eumaeus then speaks reassuring words about Penelope (37–9).

The relatively unimportant question of the reason for Telemachus’ visit having been dealt with before the after-dinner conversation, the way is clear for the much more important issue of ‘the stranger’.

23 For ἔλαβες, ‘you have come’, as the opening of a speech (here and in 17.41 spoken with relief and joy), cf. 461 (sympathy); Il. 3.428 (scorn); 24.104 (sympathy).

31–5 Telemachus spontaneously speaking about a subject of direct relevance to the unrecognized stranger (Penelope’s fidelity to Odysseus) is an instance of the kind of dramatic irony † which is typical of the ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern; cf. 4.104–12n.

His fleeting reference to Odysseus’ bed, which is perhaps covered by cobwebs, is a seed †: the bed will play a central role in the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope in Book 23.

49–54 For the humble but kind nature of Eumaeus’ meal, cf. 1–153n.

53 This *seating arrangement, Eumaeus placing himself opposite Odysseus, is used less felicitously than in 14.79, because it suggests that a conversation between these two will follow, which is not the case.

The name ‘Odysseus’, of course, derives from the narrator. For this type of paralepsis †, which regularly is found in the context of disguises, cf. 1.118n.

55–153 The after-dinner conversation consists of three parts: Telemachus and Eumaeus discussing ‘the stranger’s’ identity and accommodation (55–89), ‘the stranger’ and Telemachus discussing the situation in the palace (90–129), and Telemachus and Eumaeus discussing the latter’s mission to the palace (130–53).

55–89 In the first part of the conversation Telemachus and Eumaeus talk about the ‘stranger’ in his presence (cf. ἀδίκητος: 57), without addressing him; an instance of indirect dialogue †. ‘The beggar’ will often be talked about in his presence, both insultingly and sympathetically; cf. 17.217–32, 375–9; 20.191–6; and 21.311–58. The recurrent use of this device is related to his humble status; cf. 91, where he will first apologize before joining the conversation. In the present case, the device contributes to the build-up of
the delayed recognition: Telemachus first wants to consult his old and trusted servant; then, ‘the stranger’ enters the conversation and makes the youth unburden his worries to him; finally, he unmask himself as his father.

The indirect communication leads to a variant of the *‘identification of the guest’ ritual: Telemachus asks Eumaeus rather than ‘the stranger’ about the latter’s identity (57–9: an abbreviated variant of the international question and the local Ithacan question; cf. 1.169–77n.).

61–6 As so often, an Odyssean character explicitly claims to tell the truth, only to continue – here unwittingly – with a lie (cf. 1.179n.): Eumaeus gives a recapitulation of Odysseus’ tale in 14.192–359, which the narratees know to be a lying tale, but which he believes. His emotional involvement with ‘the stranger’s’ fate (cf. 14.361–2) is reflected in his use of *δείκνυον (64). The narratees may note the dramatic irony † of Eumaeus using phrases which echo the proem and which hence are also particularly apt for Odysseus: πολλὰ βροτῶν . . . ἀστεὰ . . . πλαζόμενος = πλάγγεθη . . . πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων . . . ἀστεὰ (1.2–3); cf. 13.429–38n.

69–89 Once again (cf. 15.508–46), Telemachus is called upon to take care of a stranger. He (A) declines to take him into his palace, because he himself is too young to defend the stranger against possible assaults by the Suitors, and his mother has not decided yet which side to choose (69–77); but (B) he will provide the stranger with clothes and an escort (78–81; cf. Eumaeus’ prediction in 14.515–17 = 15.337–9. An instance of the *‘gift of clothes’ motif), provided the stranger stays in Eumaeus’ hut and he sends food and clothes to that place (82–4). (A’) He will not allow ‘the stranger’ to go to the palace, for fear that he will be badly treated by the Suitors. It is difficult to achieve something against overwhelming numbers (85–9). It is at this point that ‘the stranger’ will enter the conversation and, reacting to Telemachus’ last point (A’), the presence of the Suitors in the palace, relegate (B) to the background. By the time Telemachus returns to (B), the question of ‘the beggar’s’ accommodation, he will present a very different plan (17.6–15): ‘the stranger’ is to go to the palace and beg among the Suitors. The change of plans is due to the intervening reunion with Odysseus; going to the palace and confronting the Suitors is now part of the revenge scheme (cf. 272–80). For characters changing their minds, cf. 15.150–9n.

73–7 For Telemachus’ views on Penelope’s remarriage, cf. 1.249–51n.
88–9 Telemachus broaches the *‘one against many’ motif.
90–111 ‘The stranger’ intervenes in the conversation: he is unpleasantly struck by what Telemachus has said about the ‘reckless folly’ of the Suitors (‘catch-word’ technique †: his ἀτάσθαλα picks up Telemachus’ ἀτάσθαλον in 86) and now wishes to know why Telemachus does not take action against them (a suggestive question; cf. 1.59–62n.). He ends by indicating how he would act, in the form of a series of wishes and potentials, aimed at countering Telemachus’ despondency in 71–2 and 88–9: ‘If only I were young again or Telemachus, or Odysseus came home; for there is still hope that this will happen. Then (A) someone could kill me (B) if I did not become an evil to them. (B’) Even if they subdued me, being alone, because of their overwhelming numbers (catch-word technique †: his πλήθυν picks up πλέονεσσειν in 88; the *‘one against many’ motif), (A’) I would rather die than go on watching their shameless behaviour.’

Odysseus starts by playing his role of beggar, humbly asking for permission to speak (91), but almost immediately is carried away by his emotions and speaks almost as Odysseus (cf. 13.429–38): his heart is ‘devoured’ by the stories about the Suitors (92); he qualifies the Suitors’ behaviour as ‘reckless folly’, *ἀτάσθαλα (93), and ‘shameless’, ἀεικέα (107), ἀεικελίως (109); he declares himself prepared to die if that is the price for taking revenge on the Suitors (105–7); and speaks of ‘my palace’ (106) after a more cautious ‘in the palace of Odysseus’ (104).

99–101 An instance of typically Odyssean wordplay: for a second it looks as if Odysseus says ‘if only I were . . . or Odysseus himself’, the ambivalence being only resolved in the next line (‘if only I were . . . or Odysseus himself would come’); cf. 19.358n.

100–4 For Odysseus’ mention of his own name just prior to revealing his identity, cf. 8.487–98n.

108–11 Some of the actions of the Suitors which Odysseus is here describing he has heard about from Eumaeus (their continuous feasting), others he has not been informed of (‘guests being smitten and servant women being dragged disgracefully through the palace’). Unless we want – genetically – to consider 107–9 an unhappy repetition of 20.317–19 (there the lines are spoken by Telemachus, who has watched the Suitors throw objects at ‘the beggar’), we must see them as the expression of Odysseus’
fantasy, which is kindled by his anger. As such, these lines form an unwitting prolepsis †; soon he will himself be smitten by objects thrown at him by the Suitors; cf. 17.360–506n. His intimation that the Suitors maltreat the maids fits the general picture of the Suitors, who do not treat their servants well (cf. 17.388–9), but it is not in fact true; the maids sleep with the Suitors of their own accord (cf. 20.6–8). Nevertheless, Odysseus will repeat this point in his formal indictment against the Suitors (22.37).

113–34 In his reaction Telemachus answers ‘the stranger’s’ question as to why he does not chase the Suitors from the palace, but he does not react to the latter’s fleeting remark that there is still hope that Odysseus will come home, or to his urgent hints that he should take revenge. Rather, he reiterates in even stronger terms the idea that he is facing a multitude alone (cf. 117–21n.) and places his fate in the hands of the gods (129). This last line at the same time also serves as a conclusion, before he turns to another addressee and another subject; cf. 130–55n.

114–21 The device of the *‘erroneous questions’: Telemachus repeats ‘the stranger’s’ suggestions in 95–8 in negated form, before offering the right answer. The format is slightly modified, in that Telemachus does not repeat the first suggestion (‘are you accepting the situation willingly?’) and offers the right answer not in an ἀλλὰ-clause but in a γὰρ-clause: ‘(I do not find brothers wanting), for I have none. And it is for this reason that all these Suitors are in the palace.’

117–21 This is the most pregnant formulation of the ‘one against many’ motif: Odysseus and Telemachus alone (μούνον, δύσω, εἶ) have to face a multitude (μυρίοι, πλεόνεσσι, πληθύνι, πολλοίσι, ἄλλεσσι); cf. 2.244–51; 3.216–17; 16.88–9, 105, 235–9, 243–6; 20.29–30, 39–40, 49–51, 313; 22.12–14, 203–4; 23.37–8.

119–20 An instance of the *‘left behind’ motif. Here it is given an added pathetic touch through the addition of the ‘he invested but never enjoyed’ motif (cf. 11.323–5; 17.292–4; 21.35–8nn.); this is the Odyssean variant of the Iliadic motifs of ‘bereaved parents’, who miss the recompense of rearing their child (e.g., II. 4.477–9), and ‘young husband slain’, who has never been able to enjoy life with his bride (e.g., II. 11.241–3).9

122–8 This information is already known to the narratees (cf. 1.245–51), but not to Odysseus; for his gradual briefing on the Suitors, cf. 13.376–81n.

130–55 In the last part of his speech Telemachus turns to Eumaeus and

executes the instructions given by the Dream in 15.40–2 (‘send Eumaeus to Penelope, to report that you have returned safely’): in part he repeats its words (131 = 15.42), in part he adds some of his own (‘return when you are finished and let no one else hear it, for many are planning evil against me’: 133–4), which trigger a discussion on whether to inform Laertes as well (137–53n.). Eumaeus will do as Telemachus tells him, but the news will reach the Suitors all the same; cf. 328–41n. The main function of his mission is to remove him from the scene and to allow father and son to be secretly reunited.

137–53 As in 4.735–54, the suggestion is made that *Laertes should be informed, only to be rejected again (or rather, Telemachus rejects Eumaeus’ suggestion to go, and replaces it by a modified one, to ask Penelope to send one of her maids; this is never reported as executed). The functions of this instance of the *‘rejected suggestion’ device seem to be (i) to remind the narratees of the old man’s existence and heighten the *suspense about when and how he will finally enter the story. (ii) To allow for the dramatic irony † of Telemachus saying that if he had a choice he would choose in the first place the return of his father, in the presence of his father and just prior to the moment when the latter will reveal himself to him.

As in 1.189, information about Laertes is explicitly recorded as hearsay (‘they say’: 143), thus emphasizing the old man’s isolation. It now turns out that he knows about Telemachus’ trip, whereas in 4.735–43 it was decided not to inform him about it; his knowledge can be explained either as an instance of transference †, he knows what the narratees know, or ellipsis †, his being informed has not been recorded by the narrator.

154–5 A brief instance of a *‘dressing type-scene’, here at a moment of departure.

155–219 The reunion between Odysseus and Telemachus forms the last part of this instance of the ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern; cf. 4–219n. It starts off with a meeting between Athena and Odysseus, in which the goddess ‘gives Odysseus permission’ to reveal himself to his son (whom in 13.403 she had still included among those from whom his identity should be concealed) and removes his disguise (155–77). This is the only time Odysseus receives divine instructions about the moment of revelation. Odysseus’ sudden change of appearance makes Telemachus think he is a god (177–85); Telemachus’ embedded focalization † in 179 (shifter: μη + optative) prepares for his speech (183: ‘you must be some god’). Odysseus
now (iv) reveals himself (186–9): he is not a god (the ‘catch-word’ technique †: σῷς τίς . . . θεὸς ἐμι picks up τίς θεὸς ἐσσί in 183), but his father (herewith he puts an end to Telemachus’ uncertainties in 1.215–16), on whose account Telemachus has been suffering hardships, experiencing the violence of men (he harks back to what Telemachus had recounted in 85–9 and 113–28). For Odysseus, the recognition is now completed and at last he allows himself (vii) to weep (190–1). (v) Telemachus, however, reacts with scepticism (192–200): he is not his father (‘catch-word’ technique: σῷς σῦ . . . ἐσσί πατήρ ἐμός picks up πατήρ τεὸς ἐμι in 188), but a *δαιμόν is fooling him by changing the old beggar into a younger man (who claims to be his father), only to make him weep all the more (when he discovers that the man is not his father) (‘catch-word’ technique: στεναχίζω picks up στεναχίζων in 188). (vi) Odysseus cannot overcome Telemachus’ scepticism by means of a token (sema), because his son was only a baby when he left. He must therefore have recourse to verbal persuasion (201–12): he first rebukes his son (cf. his rebuke of Penelope in 23.166–72), then reveals himself a second time, now defining himself in terms of his own hardships (205–6), and explains that it was Athena who transformed him (208–12). (vii) The recognition is now complete and both weep (213–19; expanded with a simile).

Telemachus’ temporary identification of Odysseus with a god also has thematic relevance: Odysseus’ return is presented as a kind of theoxeny; cf. 13.335–8n.

155–77 Athena’s meeting with Odysseus is an instance of a *‘god meets mortal’ scene. The goddess appears in the same shape as in 13.288–9. She is seen only by Odysseus and the dogs, not by Telemachus; cf. 13.312–13n.

155–7 Athena is ‘brought on stage’ by the typically Homeric device of making her note what is taking place on that ‘stage’, here Eumaeus’ departure; cf. 1.328–9n. The particular expression chosen to present her perception (‘did not escape her attention’; cf. Il. 13.560) suggests that she has been waiting for this moment (which she herself has staged; cf. 15.40–2). The narratees may note the difference in focalization: the narrator said that Eumaeus ‘went towards the city’; Athena sees that ‘he moves away from the farmhouse’, i.e., that the coast is clear for the reunion between father and son.

162–3 An instance of the *‘watchdog’ motif: Eumaeus’ dogs, who earlier had barked at Odysseus, but not at Telemachus, now whimper at the goddess.
164 The gesture of ‘nodding with the brows’ often replaces the spoken word: here Telemachus is not meant to notice Athena’s presence; in 9.468–9 Odysseus has to communicate with his companions in this way, in order to prevent the (blind) Cyclops from spotting them; in 12.194 because his companions’ ears are filled with wax; in 21.431 because the Suitors must not know of the mutual understanding between father and son.

167–71 Athena’s speech is a *‘table of contents’ speech: ‘reveal yourself to your son’ (announcement of 177–219), ‘plan the Suitors’ death’ (announcement of 233–321), ‘and then go to town’ (Book 17). ‘I will be with you, eager to fight’ (second announcement of Athena’s help during the slaughter of the Suitors in Book 22; cf. 13.393–6).

169–70 An instance of the *significant use of the dual; it underlines that from now on Odysseus and Telemachus form a team (of avengers). Again in 238–9.


177 For this standard indication of a god returning after an intervention, cf. 6.41–7n.

190–1 Only now does the narrator tell us that all the while Odysseus has been suppressing his tears (since the entrance of his son in 11). This is an instance of the ‘belated reaction presentation’ device; cf. 7.233–9; 8.548–9; 17.182–203nn.; and II. 9.34–6.


211 For the proverbial ‘ease’ of the life and actions of the gods, cf. 3.231n.

216–19 The weeping of Telemachus and Odysseus is compared to that of vultures or sea-eagles, who have lost their young; for another ‘bird’ simile in the context of weeping, cf. 19.518–24 (Penelope is compared to a nightingale); for the repeated use of ‘bird’ imagery in connection with Odysseus and Telemachus, cf. 2.143–207n.; for ‘parents and children’ comparisons, cf. 2.47n. The primary function of the simile † is to illustrate the loudness,
intensity, and piteous nature of their weeping. This last detail is natural enough in relation to the birds, who have lost their young, but what about Odysseus and Telemachus, who have just been reunited? No explanation is given, but a comparison with the ‘recognition’ scene between Odysseus and Penelope provides a clue: there she complains that the gods begrudged them their enjoyment of their youth together (23.210–12); likewise, father and son presumably deplore the years of separation,\(^\text{10}\) during which Telemachus grew up virtually an orphan, and Odysseus was deprived of the joy of seeing his child grow up.

220–1 An ‘if not’-situation † describes how the process of weeping is cut short, and thus functions as a transitional formula;\(^\text{11}\) cf. 21.226–7 and 23.241–2 (both times in the context of recognitions).

221–4 Telemachus puts an end to the weeping and reverts – note γὰρ in his opening line – to Odysseus’ words in 204–6: the youth realizes that the explanation of how ‘the beggar’/Odysseus came to Ithaca which Eumaeus gave in 61–7 cannot be true (as the narratees knew all the time), and he asks again how he came here (222–4/H1101557–9).

227–34 Odysseus’ answer is a mirror-story †, which takes the form of an internal repeating analepsis: he summarizes what was told in 13.70–440. His use of the present tense, epic τε, and iterative subjunctive in connection with the Phaeacians (227–8) may be seen as dramatic irony † by the narratees, who know that their custom of escorting strangers has in fact been brought to an end (cf. 13.125–87). The narratees may note that Odysseus skips the long story of his earlier adventures; not only is he eager to plan his revenge on the Suitors (actorial motivation †), but they have already been recounted in Books 9–12 and will be briefly recounted again in 23.310–41 (narratorial motivation †).


235–321 The revenge on the Suitors is further worked out (and hence revealed to the narratees); cf. 13.372–439n. The revenge still rests on the two pillars of Odysseus’ disguise and a battle against the Suitors. As regards the former, Odysseus repeats Athena’s instructions that his return must remain a secret even to his φιλοί (299–320), and that, should Odysseus be maltreated by the Suitors, Telemachus must put up with it (274–80). With

\(^{10}\) Eisenberger (1973: 226).

regard to the battle, he now introduces two new issues: they need helpers (235–69) and the arms hanging in the *megaron* should be removed (281–98).

235–69 Odysseus starts the planning by reverting to *‘the one against many’* motif, which had been brought up – despondently – by Telemachus in the previous conversation (cf. 88–9 and 117–21):

---

**Odysseus**

**A** Tell me the number and names of the Suitors (235–6).

**B** Then I can decide, whether we can oppose them alone (237–9a), or whether we will look for others (239b).

**Telemachus**

**B’** Father, I know your reputation for being bold and clever. But now you have suggested something very daring. *Two men* could not fight with *many*. And the Suitors are not just a handful, but many more (241–6a).

**A’** Soon you will know their number:

(*catch-word’ technique †: ἔριθμων picks up ἔριθμησας in 235*)

from Doulichion fifty-two Suitors and six servants, from Same twenty-four Suitors, from Zakynthus twenty, from Ithaca twelve, and Medon, Phemius, and two servants. If we set ourselves to fight against all those who are in the palace, I fear that your revenge might be bitter and fierce (246b–255).

**C’** But if you can think of a helper, name one (256–7).

**Odysseus**

**C’’** Would Athena together with Zeus suffice? Or should I think of another helper (259–61)?

(no hint yet of the role of Eumaeus and Philoetius as helpers)

**Telemachus**

**C’’’** These are excellent helpers – though they are sitting high in the sky – for they rule both men and gods (263–5).

**Odysseus**

**C’’’’** These two will not be far off, (using a negated expression Odysseus counters the trace of scepticism inherent in Telemachus’ remark that these two gods ‘are sitting high in the sky’)

whenever the fighting between the Suitors and us is being decided (267–9).

---

Odysseus and the narratees are further informed about the Suitors; cf. 13.376–81n. Having heard in 122–5 that they are many, he is now given their exact numbers. The information increases the suspense; how is Odysseus to solve the problem of overcoming more than a hundred opponents? For the time being, the narratees have to content themselves with a
very general announcement that Athena and Zeus will help them. Odysseus passes on to his son the promise of Athena’s support, which he himself had received in 13.387–96, and which she had recently reminded him of in 170–1. He himself adds Zeus. In the remainder of the conversation he will twice more refer to the assistance of Athena and Zeus: 282 and 297–8. These references to Zeus and Athena are intended by Odysseus to encourage his son, while the narrator uses them to stress that Odysseus’ revenge is divinely sanctioned (cf. 1.224–9n.).

252 The explicit mention of *Medon and *Phemius is in this context a seed †; both will make their appearance during the slaughter of the Suitors.

270–3 Odysseus works out Athena’s instructions to him (she had merely said that Odysseus and Telemachus should go to town: 13.170): they will go separately; cf. Introduction to 17.

274–80 Odysseus repeats the instructions ‘to endure’ the aggression of the Suitors which Athena gave him in 13.306–10. The goddess had spoken only of ‘sorrows/pains’, Odysseus is already more specific: ‘you must endure it, even if they drag me by my feet through the palace (this prepares for Irus, who will try to drag him out of the palace: cf. 18.1–158n.), and throw objects at me (this prepares for the three throws by Suitors: cf. 17.360–506n.). Whereas Athena had prescribed to him complete silence, he allows his son to react with gentle words. Once Telemachus will react with silence (17.489–91), once with a critical but controlled speech (18.406–9), and once with a critical and menacing speech (20.304–19); the gradual increase in openness marks the approach of the slaughter of the Suitors.

280 A *prolepsis of the Suitors’ death, here in terms of their fate having been sealed.


300–10 The topic of *Telemachus’ resemblance to Odysseus’ is raised one last time: (Odysseus) ‘If you are truly my son, then let no one in the palace hear about my return’ – (Telemachus) ‘You will find out that I am not loose-lipped.’ The narratees have already met with some proofs of *Telemachus’ ability to keep a secret; his present promise will be confirmed by the course of events (cf. notably 17.108–49, where he does not tell Penelope about the return of Odysseus) and Euryclea in 23.30 (‘Telemachus was discreet and did not betray the plans of his father’).

301–4 Whereas in 13.402–3 Athena mentioned the Suitors, Telemachus, and Penelope as those for whom Odysseus’ return should
remain a secret, Odysseus now mentions Laertes, Eumaeus, the servants, and Penelope. The one stable factor here is Penelope (cf. Introduction to 19); Laertes is triggered by Eumaeus’ reference to him in 137–53, the swineherd by the fact that they are in his hut, the servants by the fact that Odysseus is about to enter his palace, where he will come into contact with them.

304–20 An instance of the *’rejected suggestion’ device: Odysseus suggests putting his female and male servants to the *’test’ (πειρήσθε μεν), i.e., to find out whether they are loyal. Telemachus rejects or, rather, modifies this plan (to test the women now, the men in the fields later); it would take a long time to visit all the servants living scattered all over Odysseus’ land, and in the meantime the Suitors in the palace could quietly go on devouring his goods. The device calls attention to the important issue of the loyalty or disloyalty of Odysseus’ servants, which will recur time and again until the end of the story.

Odysseus will discover whether his female servants are loyal to him both directly (18.310–45; 19.60–95; 20.5–24) and indirectly (in 19.495–8 Euryclea offers to name the loyal/disloyal female servants, an offer which at that point he rejects: 500–2, but in 22.417–34 he decides to make use of her services after all). Telemachus’ proposal to test the male servants in the fields later, after the revenge on the Suitors, is never carried out. Odysseus will, however, be able to observe the loyalty/disloyalty of two of his herdsmen without going to their places, since they come to the palace (bad Melanthius in 17.204–60 and 20.173–84, good Philoetius in 20.185–240). He will also get to know the loyalty of the farmer Dolius and his sons when he goes to the fields to see his father after the revenge (24.386–411).

322–7 For the landing of Telemachus’ ship in the city, cf. 15.495–9n.

328–412 This section does not display the usual full and leisureed Homeric style of presentation. (i) The act of Telemachus’ companions bringing his gifts to the house of Piraeus (327) and sending a messenger to Penelope (328–37) has not been prepared for. (ii) The messenger sent by Telemachus’ companions is given a one-line speech (337; cf. 7.342n.). (iii) Eumaeus’ message to Penelope (which Telemachus had given him in 131 and 151–3) is not repeated verbatim, as is the custom with messages in Homer, but merely summarized (339: ‘he told her everything that her dear son had instructed him to say’; cf. II. 7.416–17). (iv) The crucial fact of the maids reporting the news of Telemachus’ return to the Suitors (who in 346–7 turn out to know about it) is left out; an instance of ellipsis †. (v) The
return of the Suitors’ ship is not first recounted by the narrator, but is presented immediately via the embedded focalization † of Amphinomus (351–3). (vi) Medon’s report to Penelope concerning the plans of the Suitors is merely summarized (412; contrast the full scene in 4.675–715). (vii) Eumaeus’ perception of the Suitors’ ship, to which he refers in his speech (470–5), has not first been reported by the narrator in the form of embedded focalization. The effect of this jerky narration is to create a feverish, panicky atmosphere of events which follow rapidly upon one another; another instance is found in 22.99–202.

328–41 The two messengers. Though he appears out of the blue (cf. previous note), the function of the herald sent by Telemachus’ companions is clear enough: in contrast to Eumaeus, who, precisely as instructed in 130–4, takes care to deliver his report to Penelope only (his position, *‘standing near’ her, suggests secrecy), this herald blurts out the news in the presence of all the maids, via them allowing it to reach the Suitors too (cf. 346–7).

331–2 The embedded focalization † of Telemachus’ companions (shifter: ἵνα μὴ + optative) triggers one of the two instances of basileia outside direct speech (where it occurs fifteen times; once in simple narrator-text: 6.115).

335 The expression ‘[they arrived at the palace] of the/their divine king’ reflects the (implicit) embedded focalization of the herald and Eumaeus; cf. 17.255n.

340–453 Instead of following Eumaeus to his hut, the narrator remains in the palace and turns to the Suitors; in 452–3 he will turn to Eumaeus again, who by that time has reached his hut. The scene in the palace is an instance of the ‘fill-in’ technique †.

342–408 This is the second private conference of the Suitors; cf. 4.658–74n. It consists of two sessions, interrupted by a quick excursion to the beach (358–62). The first session takes place outside the palace (so as to allow Amphinomus to spot the ship of their fellow-suitors: 351), the second on the agora, but with the other Ithacans being excluded (361–2).

On the one hand the scene shows the narratees once again the depravity of the Suitors, in particular their leader Antinous; they react exactly as Telemachus had feared (cf. 133–4), viz. by planning his death. On the other hand, it highlights their impotence and loss of control: (i) whereas they were angry when they found out about Telemachus’ departure (4.661–2), his safe return makes them sad and depressed (342). (ii) Eurymachus’ suggestion
that they should tell the other Suitors lying in ambush that they may return is overtaken by events; they return of their own accord (345–57; for 351, cf. 11n.). (iii) Antinous concludes, in amazement, that their ambush has failed, despite their vigilance by day and by night (364–70). (iv) His proposal that they think of another way to kill Telemachus (371–92) is replaced by Amphinomus’ temporizing policy: to consult the gods first (400–6). No such consulting will be recorded: after a reminder in 448, the narratees will hear no more about the Suitors’ intention to kill Telemachus until 20.241–7, at which point it is abandoned on account of a negative omen.

The powerlessness of the Suitors is further underlined by the juxtaposition † of their abortive murder plan and Odysseus’ solid revenge scheme (233–321).

351–60 An instance of the *‘landing’ type-scene, whereby the first elements are – uniquely – focalized by a character:12 *Amphinomus sees (ii) the ship of the Suitors in the harbour (352), (iii) (the men) furling the sails (353a), and (iv) having oars in their hands (353b). After he has verbalized his perception (354–7), the Suitors go to the beach. (ix) They draw the ship on land and their servants (viii) unload the gear (358–60).

354–7 Amphinomus ‘laughs heartily’ at the sight of the Suitors’ ship, because its spontaneous return makes Eurymachus’ suggestion in 348–50 superfluous; note the catch-word technique †, éγγελην picking up éγγελωσι (350), οἶδε picking up κεῖνοις (350)

356–70 The narrator, by having Amphinomus and Antinous speculate about Telemachus’ escape (the Suitors saw his ship but could not overtake it, or a god has helped him), once again (cf. 15.301–495n.) glosses over the question of exactly how Telemachus has managed to do so.

364–92 Antinous’ speech consists of three parts: ‘(evaluation) A god must have effected Telemachus’ miraculous escape (364–70; the section is marked off by ring-composition †: 364 ≈ 370). (first, aggressive proposal) Let us kill Telemachus on his way home, before he reveals our murderous intentions to the Ithacans (ring-composition: 371 ≈ 383), and let us divide his livestock and give the house to the one who marries the queen (371–86). (second, more moderate proposal) If you would prefer to let him live and have his patrimony, let us not eat his livestock gathering here, but let each of us

12 Arend (1933: 79).
woo Penelope from his palace, seeking to win her with gifts (387–92). *Antinous’ first, aggressive, proposal is very much in character.*

370 Antinous typically uses *δακμν*, because according to Jörgensen’s law †, he does not know what the narrator and narratees know, namely that it was Athena who helped Telemachus (15.292–4), and also because from his point of view, the rescue of Telemachus is a negative event.

393–8 The other Suitors react with silence to Antinous’ speech, which implies disapproval of his proposal to kill Telemachus on his way home; cf. their approval of Amphinomus’ counter-proposal in 406. The *(all) the others . . . but X (alone) . . .’ motif – positively – singles out Amphinomus as the only one who dares openly to react to Antinous’ proposal. Antinous’ ruthless behaviour will meet with collective criticism in 17.481–8.

394–9 Amphinomus13 is given an explicit narratorial characterization †, as often occurs in Homer prior to an important speech, and as always, it is tuned to the immediate context: his speeches please Penelope, ‘for he had a sensible mind’ (the same expression was used of Eumaeus in 14.421). His sensibility comes to the fore in his speech, which is ‘plugged’ by the narrator through his speech-introduction (399; cf. 2.157–60n.): he shows decency (‘it is a terrible thing to kill a person of royal blood’) and piety (‘let us consult the gods first’), though, ultimately, of a dubious kind (‘if the gods comply with his death, I will kill him myself’).

Amphinomus’ behaviour in the ensuing books will be characterized by the same moderation: in 18.119–57 he is friendly to ‘the beggar’/Odysseus and in return receives kind words from him; in 18.394–6 ‘the beggar’ seeks protection at his knees and in 414–22 Amphinomus speaks protective words; in 20.245–6 he again aborts a plan to murder Telemachus. However, despite his moderate character, he will be killed by Telemachus in 22.89–98, as predicted by the narrator in 18.155–6.

409–51 While in 4.675–767 one scene showed us Penelope’s reaction to the news – also brought to her by Medon – of Telemachus’ departure and the ambush of the Suitors, here her reaction is split up into two scenes: the present one shows us her response to the Suitors’ new plan to kill Telemachus, while in 17.36–166 we see her welcoming Telemachus back.

The queen confronts the Suitors in a *Penelope leaves her room’ scene:

she (i) leaves her room because she has heard about the the Suitors’ plan to kill Telemachus in the palace (409–12); (ii) goes to the *megaron* in the company of servants (413); (iii) takes a position near one of the central pillars, veiled (414–16); (iv) speaks (418–33); (v) receives an answer (435–47); and (vii) without further reacting retires to her upper room again, where she weeps until Athena makes her fall asleep (449–51).

409–12 The change of scene †, from the Suitors in the *megaron* to Penelope in her upper room, is abrupt: the narrator turns to her with the *’X thought of something else’* motif and then explains her sudden impulse to appear before the Suitors by recounting, in the form of internal completing analepses †, that Medon had informed her about the Suitors’ plans, which he himself had overheard; cf. the comparable but not identical switch in 4.675–8.

410 *ὑπέρβης*, ‘arrogant, overweening’, belongs to the character-language †: it occurs nine times in direct speech, once in embedded focalization (here; shifter ‘she conceived of the plan . . .’). Five of its seven Odyssean occurrences concern the Suitors.

412 For the figure of Medon, cf. 4.675–715n.

417–33 Penelope’s speech takes the form of a multiple ring-composition †:

A *(rebuke)* Antinous, they always say you are the most sensible of your fellows. But it now turns out you were not (418–20).

B *(accusation)* Why do you plan to kill Telemachus and take no notice of the supplications of which Zeus once was witness (421–3)?

C *(anecdote)* Odysseus once helped your father, when he came to his palace as a suppliant (424–30).

B’ *(accusation)* It is his house you are devouring, his wife you are wooing, his son you are planning to kill (431–2).

A’ *(request)* But I urge you to stop and to exhort the others (433).

424–30 For the urgency of external analepses † introduced by ‘don’t you know/remember how . . .?’, cf. II. 15.18; 20.188; and 21.441–2.

434–47 As in 1.388–411, it is *Eurymachus who answers a speech which was addressed to Antinous; he is the more diplomatic, indeed hypocritical, of the two ring-leaders. The structure of his reply mirrors that of Penelope’s
speech, except for the outer ring which was directed specifically at Antinous. In this way he underlines the fact that he is countering the content of her speech:

B  
(Encouragement) Don’t worry. No one is going to kill Telemachus.  
Sooner a person with such intentions would be killed by us (435–42).

C  
(Anecdote) For I have often received kindness from Odysseus, when I  
was a child (442–4).  
(he comes with his own anecdote, about himself, to counter that of Penelope, about Antinous)

B’  
(Encouragement) Therefore Telemachus need not fear death from the  
Suitors (445–7).

442–4 For this affectionate gesture towards a child, cf. *Il.* 9.488–9; it brings us an illustration of Odysseus’ reputation as a king who is ‘like a kind father’ to his people (2.47≈5.12).

447 As often, the speech ends with a *gnomic utterance. The present instance (‘when destruction comes from a god, there is no escaping’) heightens the hypocrisy of Eurymachus, and may also be seen as dramatic irony † by the narratees, who know that Athena is intent on the Suitors’ own destruction.

448 Although the narratees, the scene of 342–408 fresh in their minds, will have noted the hypocrisy of Eurymachus’ words, the narrator explicitly signals it in his *speech evaluation (‘thus he spoke encouragingly, but in fact he himself planned death for him, sc. Telemachus’), whereby his use of αὐτῶ is a response to Eurymachus’ claim that ‘that man does not and shall not exist, nor will be born who shall lay hands upon your son’ (437–90). At other places, too, he will reveal to us the Suitors’ unspoken thoughts: 4.638–40; 17.65–6 and 21.96–7.14 There is no indication that Penelope sees through Eurymachus’ hypocrisy here, but in 18.168 she will show that she is aware of the Suitors’ ability to speak with a double tongue.

452–3 The change of scene † is accomplished through correspondence of action: Penelope falling asleep leads over naturally to Eumaeus’ ‘night-time’ return to his hut.

454–9  For Odysseus’ transformation, cf. 13.429–38n. This time we have a summarized version (Athena changed him into an ‘old man’ and dressed him in ‘foul, *λυγρα, clothes’).

*Athena’s embedded focalization (shifter: μῆ + optative) reveals to the narratees why – for the time being – Eumaeus is to remain unaware of Odysseus’ return: he might not be able to keep the good news to himself and report it to Penelope; cf. Introduction to 14. For the same reason Odysseus will forcefully demand silence from Euryclea, after she has recognized him; cf. 19.476–94. Once again, the narrator stresses that Penelope is not to know about Odysseus; cf. Introduction to 19.

460–77 The main function of this scene is to inform Odysseus and Telemachus of the return of the Suitors’ ship.

461  For the opening with ἴλεως, ‘you have come’, cf. 23n.

465–75  Eumaeus answers Telemachus’ questions ‘(A) What rumours were circulating in town? (B) Have the Suitors already returned from their ambush or are they still lying in wait for me?’ in parallel order †: (A) ‘I did not bother to ask around town (‘catch-word’ technique †: ἐστι in 466 and 461). A messenger from (Telemachus’) companions told Penelope the news (of his return) first. (B) But I know this from personal observance. I saw a ship full of armed men enter the harbour. I think these might be them (the returning Suitors).’ Eumaeus’ speech is in part an internal repeating analepsis † (for 465–7, cf. 340–1; for 468–9, cf. 328–37), but it also contains a fact which the narrator did not record (Eumaeus having spotted the returning ship of the Suitors: 47–5; an instance of *emancipation of speech).

471  The casual mention of a topographical detail (‘Hermes’ hill’) is typical of the Homeric handling of scenery †.

476–7  From now on the conspirators Odysseus and Telemachus will often communicate with gazes and gestures; cf. 20.385–6; 21.129, and 431. Telemachus’ care to avoid Eumaeus noticing his smile and his gaze at his father shows that he is following Odysseus’ instructions in 300–2 and confirming his own claim in 310. His smile suggests a feeling of superiority (cf. 4.609n.) now that his heavily armed opponents have returned empty-handed.
This book starts day thirty-nine, which will end in 20.90, and thus takes up 1,728 lines; cf. Appendix A. Whereas in the Iliad the rhythm of narration decreases in the middle of the story, with the two long battle-days featuring the death of Patroclus and Hector, the Odyssey slows down towards the end, with the long day of Odysseus’ return to the palace and incognito meetings with the Suitors and Penelope (17.1–20.90) and that of his revenge on the Suitors and reunion with Penelope (20.90–23.341). This first day is punctuated not only by the regular sunrise (17.1) and nightfall (18.306) but also by indications of the progression of time: ‘the beggar’ fears the early morning chill (25), Eumaeus warns that the greater part of the day has passed and hence the cold will return (190–1), and the narrator notes that the third part of the day, just before sunset, has arrived (606); cf. Il. 8.66–9 and 11.84–91.1

Odysseus’ incognito stay at his palace is a highly expanded, and hence at times barely discernible, instance of the *‘visit’ type-scene, with the Suitors repeatedly perverting the hospitality ritual:2 (i) setting off (182–203); (ii + iii) arrival + situation found (260–73); (iv) reception: Odysseus is first of all seen and recognized by the watchdog Argus (291–327); instead of waiting on the threshold, ‘the beggar’ seats himself on it (339–41); instead of offering him a seat, the Suitors throw footstools at him (462–3; 18.394–7); (v) instead of being given a meal, Odysseus begs for scraps of food (Book 17 passim); (vii) ‘the beggar’ has his feet washed (19.317–507); (viii) the preparation of a bed involves several stages: the ‘bad’ female servant Melantho suggests that the beggar go away and sleep at a smithy’s or public gathering place (18.327–9), Penelope offers him a bed on the portico, with proper

bedding and blankets (19.317–19), an offer which he declines (337–42); she later repeats it and suggests, as an alternative, that he sleep on the ground (598–9), which is what he eventually does (20.1–4); (ix) the Suitor Ctesippus offers as a guest-gift an ox hoof from the meat basket, which he hurls at Odysseus (20.296–302); (x) instead of offering him an escort to his next destination, the Suitors threaten to sell him as a slave in some foreign country (20.381–3; 21.307–9). The Suitors’ perverted hospitality is noted explicitly by characters (21.312–13; 22.414–15 = 23.65–6); it is one of their *‘crimes’.

In a sense, Odysseus’ dealings with the Suitors can also be considered an instance of the *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern: he (ii) tests them (360–4n.); (iii) tells a lying tale (419–44); and (iv) finally reveals himself, (v) to which revelation the Suitors react with scepticism (22.1–88n.); (vii) instead of a tearful embrace there is a battle with death groans. Only in the Underworld will some of the Suitors acknowledge their recognition of Odysseus (24.149–50, 176–7). Whereas in the case of Odysseus’ incognito meetings with Eumaeus and Penelope, a development is visible in their relationship with ‘the beggar’ (cf. Introduction to 14), the Suitors persist in their mocking and bullying of him until the very end. They pay no heed to his former status as a rich man; on the contrary, when he speaks confidently, they blame him for acting above his station (cf. 217–32n.). They only change their minds regarding the ‘beggar’s’ physical force: the boxing match with Irus reveals his strength (18.71–4) and they hesitate to let him participate in the bow-contest for fear that he might be able to string the bow (21.285–6).

1–491 These scenes bring the execution of Odysseus’ announcements in 16.270–80 (‘you return first, I will follow with Eumaeus. If the Suitors treat me badly, endure this quietly’): Telemachus returns home on his own and is greeted by Penelope (1–182a), Odysseus is brought to the palace by Eumaeus (182b–327), and there has to endure dishonourable treatment by the Suitors (328–491). Odysseus’ suggestion to return separately is not motivated by him, but we may surmise that he wants to preclude any suspicion on the part of the Suitors as regards a connection between the prince and ‘the beggar’ (implicit actorial motivation †). The narratorial motivation † is obvious enough: in this way the narrator can recount the returns of Telemachus and Odysseus separately, and thereby postpone the charged moment of the meeting between Penelope and ‘the beggar’/Odysseus; cf. 492–606n.

Whereas Telemachus reaches the palace in three lines (26–8), the climactic moment of Odysseus’ return is emphasized by a series of retardations †: first the unpleasant meeting with the ‘bad’ goatherd Melanthius (204–60), next the description of Odysseus’ palace by ‘the beggar’/Odysseus himself (260–71), then the dialogue between Eumaeus and the beggar as to who is to enter first (272–90), and finally Odysseus’ recognition by his dog Argus (291–327).

1–25 Whereas in the *Iliad* only the gods occasionally function as actors (when they visit mortals in disguise), the *Odyssey* features not only the accomplished actress Athena, but also two mortal actors: Odysseus, who from Book 14 onwards plays the role of a humble beggar, and Telemachus, who from Book 16 onwards is a participant in the scheme of his father’s incognito return, alternately plays the role of the stern young master of the house (here, 342–58, 19.15–30) and a helpless youngster (cf. esp. 18.227–42 and 21.101–39nn.).

Here father and son perform a little charade when they inform the swineherd of their plans. Telemachus announces to Eumaeus that he is going to town to see his mother, since only when she sees him will she stop crying (in this way he motivates his departure for the palace, even though Eumaeus has already brought Penelope the news of his safe return; note that this is a new element in comparison to Odysseus’ instructions in 16.271, where he only told his son to ‘converse with the Suitors’) and then sternly orders the swineherd to bring ‘the stranger’ to town to go begging, whether he likes it or not, ‘since I cannot support the whole world’. Though Telemachus addressed Eumaeus, it is ‘the beggar’ who reacts and says he does not want to stop Telemachus (in fact, Odysseus himself had instructed him to go) and does not mind going out begging in town (‘catch-word’ technique †: δαὶτα πτωχεύειν picks up δαὶτα πτωχεύει; 11, δώσει δὲ μοι ὃς κ’ ἐθέλησιν echoes δώσει δὲ οἶ δος κ’ ἐθέλησι in 11), since he is too old to work in the fields. He deftly motivates his going to town after Telemachus by referring to his poor clothing, which makes him fear the morning cold, and conceals his knowledge of the countryside when he says ‘you say that the city is far away’.

2–4 An instance of the *‘dressing’* type-scene.

10–15 Earlier Telemachus had fiercely opposed the idea of the beggar going to town; for his change of mind, cf. 16.69–89n.

15 For a character emphatically claiming to speak the truth while lying or, as here, performing a charade, cf. 1.179n.
20–1 Odysseus employs the *'labour' motif to indicate that he is too old to do farm work.

26–166 Telemachus’ return to the palace and his meeting with his mother consist of a combination of a (doubled) *'visit' type-scene (although of course he is not a guest, from 84 onwards he brings one with him) and a (doubled) *'Penelope leaves her room' scene:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>visit</strong></th>
<th><strong>Penelope leaves her room</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Telemachus sets off (26–7),</td>
<td>and Penelope, who (ii) leaves her room (36–7),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) arrives at the palace (28–30),</td>
<td>(iv) asks Telemachus whether he has heard anything about Odysseus (38–44),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) is welcomed by Euryclea (31–5)</td>
<td>(v) receives no answer to her question, but is ordered to pray (45–56),</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

61–83 Intermezzo in the marketplace

| (i) Telemachus and Theoclymenus set off (84), |
| (ii) arrive at the palace (85), |
| (vii) take a bath (87–90), |
| (v) have a meal (91–9), |
| (vi) and after-dinner conversation with Penelope, who (iv) again asks for information (100–6), |
| (v) receives an – incomplete – answer (107–49), |
| (vi) and reacts with emotion (150). |

Theoclymenus prophesies Odysseus’ return (151–60).
Penelope reacts hopefully (162–6).
(Her return to her rooms, which had been announced in 101–4, is not recounted.)
This scene is also built up according to the ‘interruption’ technique †: Penelope broaches the question of news about Odysseus, but receives no answer from Telemachus, who leaves the palace for the marketplace to fetch Theoclymenus; after his return the subject is brought up again and completed. The effect of the interruption is to bring along Theoclymenus, who increases Penelope’s excitement by prophesying Odysseus’ return.

27 The – rare – detail of Telemachus walking ‘quickly’ reveals his eagerness to get into action and, as the embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘planting’, i.e., ‘devising’) reveals, start the revenge on the Suitors.

29–56 Telemachus’ *reception, of course, proceeds somewhat differently from that of a visitor: he stores his spear; instead of (a) waiting at the door and later (f) being led in, he enters of his own accord; (b) he is first seen by Euryclea, who (c) weeping hurries towards him and (d) does not simply take his hand, but embraces him; (d’) then Penelope likewise embraces him and (e) speaks words of welcome; (g) instead of taking a seat, Telemachus immediately leaves again for the agora. The emotional greetings match the tears at the time of his departure (Euryclea: 2.361–70, Penelope: 4.703–5) and parallel his emotional welcome by Eumaeus in 16.14–39.

37 The comparison with goddesses (repeated at 19.54) signals Penelope’s divine beauty; cf. Helen in 4.122; Nausicaa in 6.16, 101–9; 8.457. The double comparison might suggest her ambiguous status during Odysseus’ absence: she wants to be chaste (Artemis), but is desired by the Suitors (Aphrodite); cf. her references to Artemis in 18.202–5 and 20.61–90.

41–4 Penelope’s *‘welcome’ speech: greeting, which here takes the special form of ‘I had never thought to see you back from your trip’ (41–2 = 16.23–4, and cf. 13.355–60; 24.400–1), followed by a critical comment, ‘which you undertook in secret and against my will’ (cf. 4.732–4); instead of announcing the subject of the after-dinner conversation, she broaches it on the spot, eagerly asking Telemachus for news about Odysseus.

45–56 As in 1.356–9 and 21.350–3, Telemachus sends his mother back to her room; he has no time for tears. Only this time he asks her to pray and promise the gods to make a sacrifice, ‘in the hope that Zeus once would bring about works of retribution’ (only the narratees can understand that this is a reference to the revenge on the Suitors, which is now on its way; cf. 27).

54–6 An internal repeating analepsis † of 15.223–86 (Telemachus takes Theoclymenus with him) and 508–49 (Telemachus entrusts Theoclymenus to Piraeus); it serves to inform Penelope about the existence of
*Theoclymenus, who soon will prophesy to her, and to motivate Telemachus’ speedy departure from the palace again.

57 Penelope’s speech remaining wingless (i.e., her speechlessness⁴) is an intensified variant of her amazement in two other confrontations with her son (1.360–1 = 21.354–5).

58–60 In the usual Homeric manner, the execution of what was previously announced in direct speech (48–51) is faithfully recorded by the narrator. Only the going upstairs of Penelope is not mentioned. This may be an indication that she is not giving up yet; indeed, in 96ff. she will interrogate Telemachus again.

61–83 The meeting between Penelope and Telemachus is interrupted by the latter’s excursion to the agora; cf. 26–166n. In certain details this scene recalls the ‘assembly’ scene in 2.6–259: Telemachus appears flanked by two dogs (62; the ‘not alone’ motif), Athena sheds grace over him (63; a ‘beautification’ scene) and the people admire him (64), the figures of Mentor and Halitherses are present (68), and Telemachus makes a significant *seating arrangement, away from the Suitors, but next to friends of his father (67–70). The function of the scene, apart from having Telemachus collect Theoclymenus, as he announced in 52, is to heighten the tension: the Suitors feign friendship towards Telemachus, but, as the narrator reveals to the narratees (66) and as Telemachus knows only too well (79–80), they are still planning his death; Telemachus now openly avoids their company and joins the party of those faithful to Odysseus (67–70), and reveals to Piraeus that he may kill them (82).

65–6 For the Suitors’ unspoken thoughts, cf. 16.448n.

79–80 Telemachus’ rather exact hypothesis of the Suitors’ – new – evil plans against him is an instance of transference †: he is given the knowledge of the narratees, who in 16.383–6 heard Antinous speaking of killing Telemachus in the palace and dividing his patrimony.

84 Theoclymenus is referred to here in a remarkably pathetic way: τάλασσαρίον, ‘much-suffering’, belongs to the character-language † (only here in narrator-text, four times in direct speech); are we dealing with Telemachus’ implicit focalization (but nowhere does he express pity towards Theoclymenus); with the narrator’s focalization (who pities this man, whose fate it is, after inadvertently killing a kinsman, to wander

⁴ Latacz (1968).
around; cf. 15.272–6); or with the inadvertent use of a word in its regular metrical slot?

86–90 A routine instance of the *‘bathing’ type-scene: taking off mantles; (i) stepping into the bathtub; (ii) washing; (iii) anointing; (iv) clothing; (v) stepping out of the bathtub; and (vi) sitting down.

91–9 A routine instance of the *‘festive meal’ type-scene: (i) preparations (91–3); (ii) offer of food (94–5); Penelope seats herself opposite Telemachus (96–7; a significant *seating arrangement, which suggests that she will reopen the conversation); (iii) consumption (98); and (iv) conclusion (99).

101–6 A second time (cf. 44) Penelope tries to elicit information from Telemachus in an indirect way: ‘here I am, always (faithfully) crying over Odysseus and you could not bring yourself to tell me the latest news about him, before the Suitors come (i.e., privately)’. Or should we take the οὐδὲ-clause as an impatient question of the type found in 1.59–62: ‘isn’t it time that you brought yourself to tell me about . . .’?5

108–49 Telemachus now answers his mother, his speech containing a – shrewdly selective – mirror-story † or internal repeating analepsis of Books 3, 4, and (part of) 15.6 Regarding his stay with Nestor, he recalls the kind reception in the form of a summary, and repeats the old man’s – uninformative – remarks about Odysseus in the form of indirect speech. Turning to Menelaus, he begins by saying that he has seen the famous Helen, the cause of the Trojan war. No bitterness here (as in Eumaeus’ words at 14.68–71), but rather a slight sensationalism mixed with forgiveness (it was ‘the will of the gods’ which drove her. This is Helen’s own interpretation, too; cf. 4.234–89n.). Menelaus’ – informative – remarks are quoted directly: 142≈ 4.556, 143–6 = 4.557–60. The extended *‘speech within a speech’ device actually functions here as a smoke screen, since Telemachus fobs his mother off with outdated information. Wishing nevertheless to encourage her a little, he also quotes Menelaus’ confident words concerning Odysseus’ return (124–41 = 4.333–50). With regard to his return voyage, he mentions only the favourable wind sent by ‘the gods’ (an instance of Jörgensen’s law †; the narratees know from 15.292 that it was Athena). At this point he ends his account, leaving out the most salient piece of information, viz. his meeting with Odysseus in the hut of Eumaeus; here he follows Odysseus’ instructions in 16.303.

---

108 Telemachus says he will tell the truth, when in fact – as the narratees know – it will not be the whole truth; cf. 1.179n.


151–65 *Theoclymenus once again performs the task for which he has been introduced in the *Odyssey: he announces Odysseus’ return and revenge; one in a series of *prolepses of Odysseus’ return. Following the development of the plot, this prolepsis † now states that Odysseus finds himself on Ithaca. The narratees (and Telemachus) may note the dramatic irony † of Theoclymenus saying that Telemachus ‘doesn’t know clearly’, sc. where Odysseus finds himself (153). The seer bases himself on the ‘bird’ omen of 15.525–34, to which he refers in a brief internal repeating analepsis † (160–1).

For Penelope this is the first prophecy concerning Odysseus which she receives in the *Odyssey (cf. the express denial of information to her in 4.830–9); it is a prelude to the series of announcements which ‘the beggar’/Odysseus will make to her in Book 19. Her hopeful reaction is the same as that of Telemachus when Theoclymenus explained the ‘bird’ omen to him (163–5 = 15.536–8). The narratees are never told that her promise of gifts should his prophecy be fulfilled is carried out; this is a loose end, just as the whole further history of Theoclymenus is an open end (cf. 20.371–2n.).

166–82 Before coming to Odysseus and his return to the palace, the narrator briefly turns his attention to the Suitors, who are entertaining themselves and preparing food. These two activities are highlighted by the speech of the herald *Medon, who invites them to dinner (174–6; cf. 14.80–108n.). The function of this interlude is to show the contrast between the Suitors and their carefree occupations, on the one hand, and Penelope and her eager interest in Odysseus’ return, on the other; an instance of juxtaposition †. The effect of contrast is strengthened by the discontinuous change of scene † in 166–9, which takes the form of a μέν-, δὲ-clause, whereby the μέν-clause contains an appositive summary †.

169 The apparently neutral remark ‘(they amused themselves on the level ground) exactly where they did before’ may in fact be taken as an implicit comment by the narrator, who reminds the narratees that the Suitors have been in Odysseus’ palace (where they do not belong) for a long time now. This interpretation is strengthened by the explicit *narratorial intervention ‘in their wantonness’ (*ὑβρίν ἔχοντες), which follows immediately; cf. 4.627 (= 17.169); 19.62; and 20.7.
176 Medon’s speech ends, as often, with a *gnomic utterance.

180–2 An abbreviated *‘sacrifice’ type-scene.

182–203 Eumaeus and ‘the beggar’/Odysseus set off. This element of the ‘visit’ type-scene (cf. Introduction) is elaborated through the addition of a dialogue. Eumaeus’ speech (185–91) gives us his reaction to the earlier conversation 5–25, where he had been addressed by Telemachus but where the ‘beggar’ had answered in his place: only now does he show his disapproval of Telemachus’ order that the beggar should go to town; an instance of the ‘belated reaction presentation’ device (cf. 16.190–1n.). His fear of a reprimand from his master, backed up by a *gnomic utterance, shows that Telemachus’ pose as a stern young master has worked. His preference that ‘the beggar’ should stay at his farm as stableman (a friendly instance of the *‘labour’ motif), proves once again that he is a devoted guardian of Odysseus’ goods. Finally, he shows sensitivity to ‘the beggar’s’ fear of the cold (cf. 23–5). The narratees may note the dramatic irony † of Eumaeus’ reluctance to let ‘the beggar’/Odysseus go to the city.

In his answer (193–6) Odysseus again (cf. 25) carefully poses as a stranger, who has to be shown the way to the palace and knows about the uneven condition of the road only from hearsay. When he asks Eumaeus for a walking-stick to lean on, this is both part of his acting the role of an old and fragile man and a ‘seed’ †: soon the stick will play a role in the story (cf. 235–7).

182 An abrupt change of scene †, in mid verse; cf. 13.185–9n.

199–203 The narrator’s habit of faithfully reporting the execution of a character’s words allows him to place a number of accents:

Eumaeus gave a stick ‘which would please his heart.’

(θυμορές perhaps reflects Eumaeus’ kind focalization)⁷

Cf. 195–6 ‘Give me a walking-stick’

The two went on their way,

Cf. 194 ‘Let us go’

while dogs and herdsmen remained behind to guard the farm.

Cf. 186–7: ‘I would rather leave you behind as guardian of the farm.’

He led his master to town.

Cf. 194 ‘You lead the way’

(the periphrastic denomination † δανδάκεα points up the dramatic irony †; cf. 14.36n.)

⁷ Van der Mije in LfgRE s.v.
202–3 The narratees are reminded of *Odysseus’ disguise, just prior to the moment he enters the palace and his disguise will become a matter of life and death.

204–60 The confrontation with the goatherd Melanthius forms (i) one in a series of retardations † which postpone the moment of Odysseus’ arrival in his palace (cf. Introduction); (ii) an anticipatory doublet † of the three violent scenes with the Suitors to follow (cf. 360–506n.); (iii) the first of a series of four collisions between ‘the beggar’ and ‘bad’ servants, the brother and sister Melanthius and Melantho (cf. 18.310–45; 19.60–102; and 20.173–84); and (iv) a reversal of the *’stranger meets with a local inhabitant’ story-pattern: ‘the beggar’ meets with the local goatherd, but instead of being kindly escorted to the palace, is frightened away from it. Ad (ii), we find the structure which is typical of these scenes: Odysseus is taunted (215–32) and physically abused (233–4), but he restrains himself (234–8); a bystander, Eumaeus, reacts (238–46), which provokes a reaction from the aggressor (247–53). Ad (iii), the two encounters between Odysseus and Melanthius are doublets †:8 they meet when Melanthius is driving goats to the palace (213–14 = 20.174–5); the goatherd threatens the beggar, saying that violence awaits him if he goes to the palace (215–32, 20.178–82); in neither case does Odysseus let himself be provoked (234–8; 20.183–4).

204–11 On their way to the palace Odysseus and Eumaeus first arrive at the public fountain. The narrator inserts a scenery † description, which, as usual, is (implicitly) focalized by the arriving characters; cf. the past tenses (5.63–75n.). The elaborate description is not given for its own sake, but is relevant to what will follow:9 (i) the peacefulness evoked (citizens getting their water and wayfarers paying their respects to the Nymphs) contrasts with the aggression which Odysseus will encounter, and (ii) in 240–6 Eumaeus will pray to the Nymphs of the well and recall Odysseus’ pious sacrifices there.

212–14 The goatherd Melanthius (once referred to as Melantheus: 212) is never introduced by the narrator, who merely indicates that he is a goatherd and son of Dolius. His characterization † proceeds entirely by his own words and deeds, which clearly reveal his depravity: he twice reviles Odysseus (here and 20.177–84), informs the Suitors (369–73), performs menial tasks for them (20.255; 21.175), and actively helps them during the fighting in 22.135–46. His punishment follows in 22.150–200, when he is

---

captured and bound by Eumaeus and Philoetius, and 474–7, when he is mutilated and killed. He is a character doublet † of *Melantho, with whom he shares a special bond with Eurymachus (257 and 18.325); these two bad servants are a foil to the good servants *Eumaeus, *Philoetius, *Euryclea, and *Eurynome. Note the speaking element ‘black’ in their names (Melanthius, -o) versus the ‘good’ and ‘gentle’ in Eumaeus’ and Philoetius’ names. Melantho is young, Eumaeus and Euryclea old (we are not told how old Melanthius and Philoetius are); this is in keeping with the Homeric characterization of young as brazen and old as wise; cf. 2.324n.

Melanthius’ entrance on the scene is abrupt; cf. 18.1–8n. For the – incriminating – detail that Melanthius is bringing the Suitors goats ‘who excelled among all of his goatflocks’, cf. 14.17–19n.

215–16 In his speech-introduction the narrator heavily disqualifies Melanthius’ speech, adding – uniquely10 – two adjectives to the formula ἐπος τ’ ἐφατ’ ἐκ τ’ ὄνωμαξ’ν, of which ἀεικής, ‘unseemly’, belongs to the character-language † (thirty-four times in direct speech, six times in embedded focalization, seven times in simple narrator-text). He also indicates beforehand the effect of the speech on Odysseus, a rare procedure (cf. 10.481n.); the phrase ‘he moved his/her heart’ occurs seven times after a speech, only here before one.


Melanthius’ speech is particularly offensive in that (i) he does not deign to address ‘the beggar’ directly, but only talks about him (indirect dialogue †; cf. 16.55–89n.) and (ii) also reviles Eumaeus: ‘Now one poor man leads another poor man (dig at Eumaeus). Where, detestable swineherd, are you leading this beggar, spoiler of meals (‘burden’ topic)? He will ask for scraps rather than swords and vessels (Melanthius suggests that ‘the beggar’ is no aristocrat, asking for food rather than heroic guest-gifts). If you would give him to me to be a stableman, he would get food and develop his muscles. But he

does not want to work and prefers begging ('lazy topic). But I tell you this (transition): if he comes to Odysseus’ palace, footstools will be thrown at him (violence).'

219–20 Melanthius’ complaint about ‘the beggar’ as the spoiler of meals is a – dramatic ironic – instance of the *‘disturbed meal’ motif. Odysseus will indeed spoil the Suitors’ meal, killing them.

223–8 Melanthius uses the *‘labour’ motif negatively.

228 The *‘accursed belly’ motif is here used in a contemptuous way; beggars do not merely beg for their food (instead of earning it), but are moreover gluttonous; cf. the characterization of the beggar Irus as ‘famous for his ravenous belly’ (18.2–3).

230–2 Once again (cf. 13.306–10n.), violence against ‘the beggar’ is foreseen. In comparison to Odysseus in 16.277, who spoke of missiles, Melanthius is more specific, speaking of footstools; a footstool will soon be thrown at ‘the beggar’.

233 Melanthius’ behaviour elicits a *narratorial intervention, which takes the form of a negative qualification: he kicks Odysseus ‘in folly’; ἐφραξε belongs to the character-language † (fourteen times in speech, three times in simple narrator-text). The word, which can be used neutrally (e.g., in Il. 10.350: Dolon is simply unaware of the danger awaiting him), here expresses criticism: Melanthius is acting foolishly by kicking ‘the beggar’; if it were not for the necessity of maintaining his disguise, Odysseus would have killed him for this impertinence.

235–8* Odysseus’ unspoken thoughts take the shape of an *‘indirect deliberation’ scene, of the ‘whether’ form: whereas usually an emotional and a rational argument are weighed, here Odysseus hesitates between two emotional actions (either to kill Melanthius with his walking-stick or to dash his head against the ground), but in the end adopts a third – rational – course of action, to do nothing at all; cf. 23.85–90. The narratees are presented with another instance of πολύτατος Odysseus’ proverbial capacity to endure (cf. ἐπετόλμησε: 238).

238–46 As the speech-introduction makes clear, Eumaeus’ speech is a combination of a prayer and a reproach. Its structure is that of the *‘prayer’ type-scene: (i) speech-introduction with a verb of praying and praying gesture (239b); (ii) invocation of the nymphs (240a); (iii) claim to favour on the basis of past services (by Odysseus!) (240b–242a); and (iv) request (242b–243), which ends in a threat addressed to Melanthius himself
(244–6). His concluding *gnomic utterance ‘bad herdsman ruin their flocks’ seems a retort to Melanthius’ opening ‘one poor man leads another’ (217); ‘catch-word’ technique †, κακοί picking up κακός in 217.

Praying for Odysseus (to return and) punish Melanthius, Eumaeus verbalizes emotions which Odysseus has to suppress (cf. 235–7); the same thing happened in 16.14–29, but here the effect is increased through the juxtaposition † of Odysseus’ unexpressed and Eumaeus’ expressed feelings. The narratees may note the dramatic irony † of Eumaeus’ wish for a god (his use of *δεσίμων lends an urgent tone to his request) to bring Odysseus (note the typical *κείνος) back, when Odysseus is in fact standing next to him.

243 One of the many *prolepses of Odysseus’ return.

244–6 Eumaeus criticizes Melanthius for giving himself airs: the herdsman spends more time in town (feasting with the Suitors; cf. 256–60) than in the fields, tending his flocks; a similar reproach is levelled in 19.82 against Melantho. Like his masters, Melanthius is hubristic; cf. 1.227n.

248–53 Melanthius counters Eumaeus’ prayer for Odysseus’ return and the death of Melanthius himself at the latter’s hands with a threat against him (‘one day I will sell you as a slave’) and a wish for ‘Telemachus’ death, which at the same time emphatically proclaims Odysseus’ death. Like the Suitors, he believes what is most opportune to him, viz. that Odysseus is dead; cf. 1.158–68n.

249–50 For the threat to sell someone as a slave in a foreign country, cf. 18.84–7; 20.381–3; and 21.307–9.

251–3 For this type of idiomatic asseveration (‘as surely as I wish that Apollo would hit Telemachus [i.e., he would die a natural death] or he would be killed by the Suitors, so surely Odysseus far away has lost his day of homecoming’); cf. 9.523–5n. The narratees may note the dramatic irony † of Melanthius’ ‘wish’, which is soon to become a very different reality (the death of the Suitors at the hands of Telemachus, amongst others), and ‘reality’ (Odysseus’ death), which is no fact at all.

255 Saying that Melanthius reached the palace of ‘his master/king’ (= Odysseus), the narrator subtly censures the goatherd, who has not remained loyal to his true master Odysseus but has chosen Eurymachus as his new master (cf. 256–7).

256–60 This scene forms part of a triadic structure; cf. 336–58n.

260–73 The narrator varies his presentation of the situation found, which usually takes the form of a verbum sentiendi + participle; here first the
sound of a lyre reaches Odysseus and Eumaeus, and then Odysseus concludes, on account of this sound and the smell of roasting meat, that a feast must be going on. It is no coincidence that these are the first signs which Odysseus observes of the Suitors; they are doing what they do throughout the *Odyssey*: feasting; cf. 1.106–12n.

The narrator also gives a subtle twist to his habit of inserting a ‘scenery’ description † at the moment of arrival (cf. 5.63–75n.), in that he makes Odysseus himself describe his own ‘beautiful’ palace (cf. 13.242–7n.). The effect is increased by the dramatic irony † of Eumaeus’ comment on the cleverness of ‘the beggar’ in recognizing Odysseus’ palace (273; ‘catch-word’ technique †: his ἰδιὰ ἔγνως picks up ἰδία . . . ἔριγνωτ in 265). This procedure also shows us Odysseus’ talent as an actor, who is pretending to see the palace for the first time (‘this must be Odysseus’ palace’), and his self-control (only his gesture of taking Eumaeus’ hand can perhaps be interpreted as a sign of excitement at seeing his palace again after twenty years). The description is another in a series of retardations † which mark the climactic moment of Odysseus’ return home, cf. Introduction. The description is the closest we get to an overall description of Odysseus’ palace; cf. 1.103–4n. The detail of the ‘well-fencing’ courtyard doors is a seed †: in 18.384–6 ‘the beggar’ warns Eurymachus that the doors might be too small for the Suitors fleeing Odysseus (cf. Athena’s prophetic vision of Odysseus standing fully armed in the door opening: 1.255–66); in 21.388–91, when the slaughter is about to begin, Philoetius closes them.

270 A minor instance of *emancipation of speech: Odysseus smelling the roasting of meat had not been recorded before in the narrator-text.

272–90 This exchange between ‘the beggar’ and Eumaeus about who is to enter first, which results in Odysseus going in last (i) once again postpones the charged moment of Odysseus entering his own home (cf. Introduction; note the ‘catch-word’ technique †: Odysseus’ ἐφέκε προσπάροιθεν . . . ἐγὼ ὑπολείψωμαι αὐτοῦ picks up ἐφέκε . . . ἔμε προσπάροιθε in 276–7); (ii) heightens the *suspense by once again anticipating violence against Odysseus (279; cf. 13.306–10n.); (iii) gives Odysseus an opportunity to stress his capacity to endure, prior to the moment that this character trait will be seriously put to the test (cf. 5.221–4); and (iv) makes him rehearse the *‘accursed belly’ motif, prior to his begging for food.

284–5 The narratees may note the particular aptness of ‘the beggar’/Odysseus saying that he has ‘an enduring (τολμητείς) mind’ and has ‘suffered many sorrows at sea and in the war’; cf. 13.429–38n.

290 The narrator marks his switch to Argus with an appositive summary †.

291–327 The ‘Argus’ scene is an instance of the (i) *‘delayed recognition’* story-pattern and (ii) the *‘watchdog’* motif. Ad (i), the dog Argus is the only one of Odysseus’ philoi who immediately recognizes him, without a token of recognition (sema): in 291 he lifts his head and pricks up his ears (at the sound of ‘the beggar’ and Eumaeus); at this point the narrator creates tension through retardation †, inserting a chunk of information on the dog (292–300; cf. the external analepsis about the scar in 19.392–468, which interrupts Euryclea’s recognition of Odysseus); in 301–2 Argus recognizes Odysseus, which in his case takes the form of wagging his tail and drooping his ears; the usual ‘embrace’ must be omitted, because Argus is too old to move close to Odysseus (303–4a), while Odysseus has to wipe away his tears before Eumaeus notices them (304b–305); the description of Argus’ death in 326–7, finally, contains an echo (‘in the twentieth year’) of the formulation by which Odysseus usually reveals himself; cf. 16.205–6n. Ad (ii), like all Odyssean watchdogs, Argus has a symbolic function: he represents the decline of Odysseus’ household during his absence. He is actually not a watchdog at all, but a hunting dog, who now must spend his days lying outside the palace on the dung-heap; likewise, the king and hero Odysseus has to regain his own palace in the guise of a squalid beggar. The dog’s body is covered with vermin, just as the palace is infected by the parasitic Suitors. He is neglected by the maids, who likewise renounced their loyalty to their old master Odysseus in favour of new ones and will neglect ‘the beggar’.

The periphrastic denomination † ἐνακτῶς, ‘his master’, in 296 and 303 reflects Argus’ implicit embedded focalization † and adds to the pathos of the scene.

The narrator treats Argus almost like a human being: he is given a name (292, 300, 326), an introduction (292–300), and a solemn death formula (326), which in the Iliad is used of dying warriors (5.83; 16.334; 20.477).

292–300 The chunk of narratorial explicit characterization † on Argus

---

is contextually relevant, preparing for Eumaeus’ speech in 312–23: the dog was raised by Odysseus, who had to leave him behind when he left for Troy (292–4: cf. 314); he used to be very fast (294–5: cf. 315–17); he is neglected during Odysseus’ absence (296–300: cf. 318–19).

292–4 For the pathetic ‘he invested but never enjoyed’ motif, cf. 16.119–20n.

304–5 The narrator nicely varies the many instances of Odysseus hiding his tears in the Odyssey: in 8.83–6 he pulls his cloak over his head, in 16.190–1 and 19.209–12 he forcefully represses tears; here the tears come, but he turns his head to one side and wipes them away.

307–19 An instance of the *‘outward appearance versus inner quality’ theme: ‘the beggar’ asks whether the beautiful dog is also fast or whether he is a mere table dog. Eumaeus answers that he used to be very fast, but is now neglected (and has lost his speed).

312–23 There is dramatic irony † in Eumaeus’ repeated assertion to ‘the beggar’ that Argus’ master has died far away (312, 318–19) and his glowing description of Argus to the dog’s own – proud – owner (cf. 13.342–7n.).

313–15 An instance of the *‘left behind’ motif, which here is in the form of the nostalgic wish ‘if he were such as he was when . . . then . . .’ (cf. 1.253–69n.).

324–35 This scene forms part of a triadic structure; cf. 336–58n.

326–7 Dying after having seen his master again, Argus fulfils the fate which Odysseus had envisioned for himself in 7.224–5 (‘let life leave me, when I have once more seen my house’).

336–58 Odysseus’ entrance into the megaron is the last and most elaborate in a series of three entrances; an instance of a triadic structure †. In 256–60 Melanthius enters, takes up a place amongst the Suitors, opposite his favourite Suitor Eurymachus (his position symbolizing his allegiance to the Suitors; a significant *seating arrangement), and is served meat and bread. In 324–35 Eumaeus enters, has to find himself a humble seat, seats himself opposite Telemachus (his position symbolizing his allegiance to Telemachus), and is served meat and bread. Here Odysseus enters (the narrator reminding us of *his disguise, now that he is about to confront the Suitors), seats himself on the threshold (his position symbolizing his humble position), and is offered bread and meat by Telemachus. The correspondence between the three entrances is underscored by the repetition of ἐγκύκλιον, ‘close by’ (260)/’closely afterwards’ (336).
339–41 Thresholds are frequently mentioned in the Odyssey. (i) It is the place of the weak (cf. Penelope, who collapses on the threshold in 4.716–19 after hearing about the deadly trap planned for her son; ‘the beggar’, who humbly seats himself on the threshold in 339, 413, 466, 18.110; and 20.258. It is clear from the fight with the other beggar Irus in 18.1–158 that this was the customary position of beggars; cf. esp. 18.17: ‘this threshold can contain both of us’). (ii) It is the point of transition between inside and outside, thus visitors usually wait on the threshold until they are invited in, and the moment of passing a threshold is often marked (cf. Odysseus entering/leaving the Phaeacian palace in 7.135 and 13.63, and waiting at the threshold of the Aeolians when he returns there a second time in 10.62–3). (iii) In the particular case of the slaughter of the Suitors, it is a strategic position, which Odysseus takes up from the beginning and defends against attacks from the Suitors, who want to escape from the megaron (cf. Introduction to 22).

Odysseus’ gradual elevation from anonymous beggar to respected guest to master of the house is symbolized in his change of seats: he starts out sitting on the ground (threshold); then is given a δίφρος, the modest, movable chair used mainly by servants (19.97–102; 20.257–9; 21.420), by Penelope and Telemachus; and, finally, after the revenge has been fulfilled, he takes his place on a θρόνος, the grand chair of kings (24.385). 340–1 The dynamic description of the doorpost adds weight to Odysseus’ taking up this position.

342–506 This scene brings the fulfilment of 10–12 (and cf. already 15.315–16): ‘the beggar’/Odysseus begs for food in the palace. Telemachus ‘kicks off’ by spontaneously offering ‘the beggar’ a meal (342–58) and exhorting him to beg for more among the Suitors. Athena then turns the begging into a test of the Suitors (360–410). All of them give something, except for Antinous, who, moreover, actively maltreats the beggar (411–506).

342–58 Father and son perform a charade for Eumaeus (and the Suitors); cf. 1–25n. Telemachus, asking Eumaeus to exhort ‘the beggar’ to beg for more food among the Suitors, again (cf. 14–15) feigns indifference to the latter’s feelings (‘a man in need cannot afford to be shy’). When the

---

swineherd has delivered his message (350–2 = 345–7), ‘the beggar’ reacts with pious gratitude towards Telemachus.

349 Eumaeus’ position, *standing near ‘the beggar’, here probably suggests affection.

354–5 For this type of ambiguous benediction (Eumaeus will think that what Telemachus desires is the return of his father, the narratees know that it is bloody revenge on the Suitors), cf. 14.53–4n.

358 A small-scale instance of *simultaneity.

359 The narrator explicitly notes that Odysseus has finished eating and the singer stops singing; time for new action.

360–506 This is the first of three scenes in which Suitors throw objects at Odysseus: cf. 18.346–428 and 20.284–325; an instance of a triadic structure †.¹⁵ Usually there is an ascending scale of length and intensity, but here the movement is in the other direction. Antinous hits Odysseus on the right shoulder with a footstool; Eurymachus throws a footstool at him, but instead hits a wine steward on the right hand; and Ctesippus hurls an ox-foot, which Odysseus avoids and which hits the wall. This descending scale is another manifestation of the Suitors’ decline in power in the course of the story; cf. 1.367–424n. Together with Odysseus’ physical abuse by Melanthius (17.204–60) and the boxing match with Irus (18.1–158), these scenes bring the fulfilment of the violence against ‘the beggar’ anticipated by many; cf. 13.306–10n.

The scenes have a number of elements in common: Odysseus is taunted and physically assaulted, but reacts in a composed manner. The incident is commented upon by one of the bystanders, which sometimes elicits a new reaction from the aggressor. In the present case we find an expanded version:

360–4 Athena urges Odysseus to beg amongst the Suitors.
(an intervention by Athena also opens the two other pelting scenes: cf. 18.346–8 = 20.284–6)

365–410 Altercation between Melanthius, Antinous, Eumaeus, and Telemachus, which ends with threatening words and a gesture by Antinous.
(an anticipatory doublet † of 411–63)

411–63 Altercation between Odysseus and Antinous, which ends with an act of violence by Antinous.

463–5 Odysseus silently endures the assault, but
466–76 addresses the Suitors (and indirectly criticizes Antinous’ action).
477–80 The aggressor Antinous utters new threats of violence.
481–8 The other Suitors react with criticism, which Antinous fails to heed.
489–91 Telemachus reacts with silence.
(which shows him obeying his father’s instructions in 16.274–7.
The verbatim repetition 491 = 465 underscores the secret bond between the two conspirators.)

492–506a Penelope in her bedroom reacts with a malediction of Antinous.

360–4 Athena’s intervention adds a divine dimension to Odysseus’ begging among the Suitors, an idea which was initially conceived by himself and Telemachus (cf. 342–506n.); an instance of double motivation †.
*Her embedded focalization †, which takes the form of indirect speech (shifter: ‘she exhorted him’), reveals to the narratees that she is turning the begging into a *test, to separate the ‘right-thinking’ from the ‘lawless’ Suitors. However, any suggestion that right-thinking Suitors might escape punishment is immediately contradicted by a narratorial prolepsis †, containing the typical *proleptic μελάω (‘she would not defend any of them against death’); similarly 18.155–6. Note that in the case of the servants, only the guilty ones are punished. Athena *‘standing near’ to Odysseus suggests secrecy; presumably she is seen only by Odysseus not the others (cf. 13.312–13n.).

Athena’s embedded focalization triggers character-language †: ἀθέμοιος, ‘lawless’: five times in direct speech, once in embedded focalization, and once in simple narrator-text.

This is one of many passages which ensure the narratees that Odysseus’ punishment of the Suitors is divinely sanctioned; cf. 1.224–9n.

365–410 As in 16.55–89, Odysseus’ humble position as a beggar results in a variation of the *‘identification of the guest’ ritual. The Suitors do not ask the beggar himself the standard question who he is and where he comes from, but rather each other; Melanthius is able to tell them that he was brought to the palace by Eumaeus, but cannot tell them his name; *Antinous – typically – does not pursue the question of the stranger’s
identity, but suggests that they chase him from the palace; Eumaeus and Telemachus interfere and prevent this from happening. Contrast Eumaeus (14.185–90), Telemachus (16.57–9), Penelope (19.162–3), and Philoetius (20.191–4), who all display the basic politeness of showing interest in who the beggar is.

The altercation between Melanthius, Antinous, Eumaeus, and Telemachus displays a tight structure:

Melanthius

A Suitors, I have seen this man before. Eumaeus brought him here (370–3).

Antinous

A’ Swineherd, why did you bring this man to the city (375–6a)?
B Do we not already have enough other beggars (376b–378)?
B’ (ironically) Or do you make little of the men who have gathered here and eat your master’s substance (379–80a)
A” and therefore invited this one on top (380b)?

Eumaeus

Antinous, though noble, you are not saying good things (381).
A’” Who invites another stranger (382–3a),
B” unless he were one of the workers for the people like a seer, doctor, carpenter, or singer (383b–386)?
(this list of useful people seems intended to counter the useless beggars)
A’’” A beggar no one would invite (387).
(‘catch-word’ technique †: καλεῖ and καλέοι pick up ἐκάλεσσας in 379)
C But you are always nasty to Odysseus’ servants and me in particular. But I do not care as long as Penelope and Telemachus are alive (388–91).

Telemachus

C’ (to Eumaeus) Do not pay any attention to Antinous; he is always provoking people with nasty words (393–5).
(‘catch-word’ technique: χαλεποίσιν picks up χαλεπτός in 388)

Telemachus

B’’’ (to Antinous, sarcastically) You kindly care for me as a father for a son, exhorting me to chase the stranger from the palace. But you may give. I do not restrain you. Don’t fear my mother or one of the servants (396–402).
(angry) But the truth is that you want to keep all the food for yourself (403–4).

Antinous

B’’’ (threatening) If all the Suitors would provide this much (he points at his footstool), the beggar would not return to the palace for three months (406–8).
Throughout this scene ‘the beggar’ is spoken about in his presence; an instance of indirect dialogue †. His presence as a silent character † is confirmed by the use of the deictic pronoun ἐ before 371, 375, and 379; it allows him to witness Antinous’ insolent behaviour, Eumaeus’ brave loyalty, and Telemachus’ superior reaction.16

388 The typical ‘always’ of quarrels; cf. 8.309; 14.150; 17.394; and 23.103.17

392–404 The ‘two consecutive speeches by one speaker’ device highlights, through the insertion of a fresh speech-introduction (396), Telemachus’ change of addressee (from Eumaeus to Antinous).

397 For Telemachus using a ‘father–son’ comparison, this time sarcastically, cf. 1.308n.

411–12 The statement that ‘all the others gave . . .’ raises tension, since it suggests that one person will not give; a variant of the *(all) the others . . . but X (alone) . . .’ motif (cf. the summary in 503–4).

412–13 The narrator further raises tension by the use of *interruptive μέλαν (‘he was about to return to his place and eat’), which suggests that the confrontation almost ended peacefully.

414–61 The confrontation between Odysseus and Antinous belongs to a series of *warnings which the Suitors receive and brush aside: ‘the beggar’ holds up his own fate as an example, his change from a rich man into a beggar as a result of hubris, but instead of taking heed, Antinous behaves hubristically against him both in word and deed.

The overall structure of the dialogue is that of ring-composition †:18

| Odysseus | A     | Give, because you look like a king (415–16). |
|          | B     | Therefore you should give even more than the others (417–18). |
|          | C     | I too once was rich, but I went to Egypt and Cyprus and ended up here suffering sorrows (419–44). |
| Antinous | C’    | Which god brought us this ‘sorrow’? |
|          |      | (‘catch-word’ technique †: πῆμα picks up πῆματα in 444. He typically uses *δαμάω, to stress his negative view on the beggar’s arrival) |
|          |      | Stay away from my table, lest you come to a bitter Egypt and Cyprus (446–9). |

Odysseus once more tells a *lying tale, a highly abbreviated version of the story he told Eumaeus in 14.192–359; cf. Appendix E. A comparison of the two versions reveals its ‘argument’ function † here, viz. to warn Antinous:

419–23 I too used to be a prosperous and rich man
(in 14.199–234 Odysseus had recounted at length how he acquired his wealth; now he simply takes this fact as his point of departure, because he wants to move on to his reversal of fortune)
and I gave food to wanderers.
(he adds this detail in view of the direct context, his request to Antinous to give him food)

424–6 But Zeus destroyed my wealth, urging me to go to Egypt with ‘roving pirates’, which became my ruin.
(in 14.245–7 it had been ‘the stranger’s’ own idea to depart for Egypt with ‘godlike companions’. The introduction of Zeus and the repeated stress on the ruinous outcome of the expedition bring home the message of this tale: a man’s good fortune can change)

427–41 My companions destroyed Egyptian fields and were defeated; many were killed, others taken captive (≈ 14.258–72).

442–4 I was given as a slave to the king of Cyprus, and from there I came here.
(in 14.273–86 the Egyptian expedition ended unexpectedly well for ‘the stranger’, who became the king’s honoured guest; here it ends badly. In 14.314–59 ‘the beggar’ came to Ithaca via nearby Thesprotia, where he heard about Odysseus; here he comes via Cyprus and no mention is made of Odysseus).

419 The introduction of the tale by κοί γδρ explicitly marks its paradigmatic nature; cf. 18.138; 19.75; II. 9.502; 19.95; and 24.602.

446–54 Antinous’ irritated reaction to ‘the stranger’s tale of woe contrasts markedly with Eumaeus’ sympathetic response in 14.361–2.

For Odysseus as ‘spoiler of the meal’, cf. 219–20n.

454 An instance of the *outward appearance versus inner quality* theme: Antinous looks like a king (indeed, he is a king), but does not have the mentality of a king; a real king would have received the beggar kindly. Thus Antinous forms the exact reverse of Eumaeus, who, though only a swineherd – admittedly of royal descent – behaves as hospitably as a king.


467–76 Odysseus employs the technique of indirect dialogue †, talking about Antinous to the other Suitors, to criticize the latter’s aggressive action. His strategy is successful: in 481–8 the other Suitors will turn against their ringleader and also criticize him.

Odysseus speaks as a beggar (cf. esp. 475) and in reaction to the incident with the footstool, but his real identity and concerns show through in the form of his address, ‘suitors of a famous queen’ (468), and his threatening conclusion ‘may death reach Antinous before his marriage’ (476); cf. 13.429–38n. It is this self-confident way of speaking which will trigger a new reaction from Antinous.

473–4 For the motif of the ‘accursed belly’, cf. 7.215–21n.

478–80 Antinous’ abuse combines irritation at the ‘beggar’s’ speaking above his station (479: ‘for the kind of things you say’) and intimidation (‘take care lest the young men drag you by hand or foot through the palace and tear off everything’); cf. 217–32n. His threat anticipates the ‘Irus’ scene of 18.1–158, where the beggar Irus will threaten to drag ‘the beggar’ by his foot from the palace, but where in the end it will be the much older Odysseus who does this to him.

481–8 The collective of the Suitors express themselves in the form of an *actual tis*-speech. The effect here is to single out Antinous as especially depraved: even his own friends criticize him for throwing a footstool at the beggar. But just as he did not listen to the warning of ‘the beggar’, he does not listen to the words of his friends.

For the Suitors considering the possibility that the beggar might be a theoxenos, cf. 13.335–8n.
482 For the narrator’s negative qualification of the Suitors, cf. 2.324n.
489–91 The negated narration ‘but he did not shed tears’, underscores Telemachus’ self-restraint; he does not do what he normally, i.e., but for Odysseus’ instruction in 16.274–7, would have done.
492–606 In this scene the narrator sets a first step on the long road towards the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope; cf. Introduction to 19. Penelope, having heard about ‘the beggar’, decides she wants to talk to him. ‘The beggar’ accepts but only agrees to come in the evening. Thus the night-time encounter between Odysseus and Penelope in Book 19 is prepared for, but immediately postponed; the retardation † increases the tension (will Odysseus be able to go through with his incognito scheme even vis-à-vis his wife?) and allows Odysseus first to watch Penelope in action from a distance (cf. 18.158–303n.).

As in 4.625–847, the scene actually consists of a succession of little scenes, the narrator switching between Penelope (in her bedroom) and the megaron in an instance of small-scale ‘interlace’ technique †:

492–506a (bedroom) Penelope and Eurynome react to the footstool incident in the megaron.
506b (megaron) Odysseus is still busy eating.
507–40 (bedroom) Penelope and Eumaeus talk about inviting ‘the beggar’.
541–2a (megaron) Telemachus sneezes.
542b–551 (bedroom) Taking the sneeze as a positive omen, Penelope appeals even more urgently to the swineherd to invite ‘the beggar’.
552–73 (megaron) Eumaeus delivers Penelope’s message. ‘The beggar’ says he wants to wait till the evening.
574–89a (bedroom) Eumaeus delivers ‘the beggar’s’ message. Though at first disappointed because she does not see ‘the beggar’, Penelope soon realizes the good sense of his proposal.
589b–606 (megaron) Eumaeus takes his leave from Telemachus.

The effect of the ‘interlace’ technique is to make clear the growing contact between husband and wife, even though they do not as yet see each other, communicating only via a go-between.

492–506 The intimacy of the bedroom (cf. 506) allows Penelope and her maid openly to vent their feelings of hatred towards the Suitors:
Penelope hears the beggar being hit and says:
May Apollo likewise hit you yourself, Antinous (494).
(a special form of ‘catch-word’ technique †: her βάλαι echoes the
narrator’s βλημένου in 493. She unwittingly counters
Melanthius’ malediction in 251. The apostrophe of absent
Antinous gives her words extra force.)

Eurynome May none of them survive this night (496–7).
(she broadens Penelope’s malediction)

Penelope All Suitors are hateful, but Antinous most of all,
(she uses a summary priamel † to surpass her servant’s utterance)
because where all the others gave the stranger food, he hit him
with a footstool on his right shoulder (499–504).

This scene, containing two *prolepses of the Suitors’ death, adds to the
build-up of tension. Showing that Penelope is aware of the presence in the
palace of a stranger, it also prepares for her next step, her invitation to him.

Eurynome is a character doublet † of *Euryclea. While the latter is pre-
dominantly associated with Odysseus and Telemachus, Eurynome is
Penelope’s confidante: here Penelope shares her feelings about the Suitors
with her; in 18.164–86 it is to her that the queen announces her plan to
appear before the Suitors. Her status is that of a ‘chamber-maid’; indeed,
most of the time, she finds herself in Penelope’s bedroom (here and in
18.164ff.); she prepares a place for ‘the beggar’ to sleep in 20.4; together with
Euryclea prepares the bedroom for the reunited couple in 23.289; and leads
the couple to it in 293–4. For a temporary but significant reversal of roles

492–3 A change of scene †, from the Suitors in the megaron to Penelope
in her bedroom, along a line of perception. τοῦ . . . ἤκουσε . . . βλημένου
could mean that Penelope (i) herself ‘heard him being hit’ or (ii) ‘(from
another) heard how/that he was hit’. In the second case, we would be
dealing with an ellipsis †, in that it is not recorded that Penelope is
informed (e.g., by Medon). In the first case, Penelope from her bedroom is
able to hear and see what is happening in the megaron. If her bedroom is the
same as her upper room (which seems to be suggested by 18.207), it is clear
that she at least can hear what is happening in the megaron: she hears
Telemachus sneeze (541–5), Phemius sing (1.328–9), and the Suitors talk
(20.387–9); and cf. 513–14, which suggests that Penelope could not listen properly to the stranger, because of the shouting of the Suitors. Her detailed knowledge of visual details (cf. 504: ‘on his right shoulder’ and 511: ‘he resembles a man who has been much tossed about’) are best explained as an instance of transference†. If we choose the first interpretation, as I think we should, this also means that – exceptionally – the narrator does not observe the ‘continuity of time’ principle †; cf. Appendix B. The reason is clear enough: he wishes to add Penelope’s reaction to the footstool incident, as the third in a row after that of the other Suitors (note ἐβολέας) and Telemachus (note βλημένου).

494 In a broad sense, Penelope’s wish will come true, in that Antinous dies through an arrow shot on a festive day for Apollo; cf. 20.276–8n.

For one-line speeches, cf. 7.342n.

501–4 An internal repeating analepsis † of 360–491 (503≈411, 504≈462–3), including a regular instance of the *‘all the others . . . but X . . .’ device. For Penelope’s detailed knowledge, cf. 492–3n. Like Eumaeus in his first confrontation with Odysseus, Penelope spontaneously shows compassion for the ‘wretched stranger’.

505–7 The change of scene †, from Penelope to Odysseus, is discontinuous; it takes the form of μέν-δέ, whereby the μέν-clause contains an appositive summary †. After only half a verse, the narrator – again abruptly – changes back to Penelope again. Her action of calling the swineherd to her upper room is presented very briefly.

507–90 This scene shows a triadic structure †, Penelope thrice asking Eumaeus to call ‘the stranger’, her tone becoming increasingly eager:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Penelope</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Go and urge ‘the stranger’ to come (508–11).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eumaeus</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>If only the Suitors would be quiet, then you could enjoy his fascinating tale (513–21),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>in which he says that Odysseus is near (522–7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penelope</td>
<td>A’</td>
<td>Go and call him here, so that he himself can tell me (what he told you) face to face (529).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B’</td>
<td>They [the Suitors] could feast near the doors or at home, for their own goods are unspoiled, but they always devour ours. For there is no man like Odysseus to chase them (530–8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C’</td>
<td>If only Odysseus would come home and punish them (539–40).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
509–11 In contrast to Eumaeus (cf. 14.378–85), Penelope has not given up asking strangers about Odysseus, despite disappointing experiences in the past (cf. 14.122–30 and, perhaps, 17.555). The narratees may note the specific aptness of Penelope’s remark that the stranger resembles ‘one who has been much tossed about’ (πολυπλαγκτὸς); cf. 1.205 and 13.429–38nn.

515–17 Odysseus arrived at Eumaeus’ hut on the thirty-fifth day and we now find ourselves on the thirty-ninth day (cf. Appendix A); thus, strictly speaking, Eumaeus’ statement that the stranger stayed with him for three days and three nights is not exact. Either Eumaeus is using typical numbers † or his statement has been adapted to the narratees’ perception: they have seen Odysseus in Eumaeus’ company on only three days (Book 14: thirty-fifth day, Book 15: thirty-sixth day, Book 16: thirty-eighth day).20

518–21 For the comparison of Odysseus to a singer, cf. 11.363–9n. Here the motif is used to illustrate the enchanting *effect of his tales (Θέλγειν: 514, 521).

522–7 Eumaeus’ summary of ‘the stranger’s lying tale (told to him in 14.192–359) naturally focuses on those elements which are most relevant to Penelope: his status as an old guest-friend of Odysseus’ and his message that Odysseus is alive and nearby. Strictly speaking, ‘the beggar’ did not tell Eumaeus that he was Odysseus’ guest-friend, only that, like him, he had fought before Troy (14.235–42). Here the narrator seems to interfere, anticipating what Odysseus will tell Penelope in 19.185.

539–40 Penelope’s *prolepsis of Odysseus’ return is adapted to the stage

at which the plot finds itself, in that she now speaks of Odysseus taking revenge together with his son.

Penelope’s fierce criticism of the Suitors repeats words spoken earlier by Telemachus (534–8 = 2.55–9); the verbatim repetition signals – to the narratees – that Penelope in fact shares her son’s focalization of the situation, something of which the latter is not always sure (cf., e.g., 1.249–50).

541–7 Telemachus’ portentous sneeze is one of the manifold *prolepses of Odysseus’ return. The structure of the scene resembles that of an *‘omen’ scene: immediately after (and apparently in reaction to) Penelope’s wish for Odysseus’ return (539–40), (i) Telemachus sneezes (541–2), (ii) which triggers a joyful reaction (542; this is the first time Penelope laughs in the Odyssey), and (iii) is interpreted in terms of a confirmation of her wish (545–7).


551–2 The change of scene †, from Penelope to Odysseus, is accomplished by the narrator following in the footsteps of Eumaeus. His position, *standing near ‘the beggar’, suggests secrecy.

553–9 Eumaeus delivers Penelope’s message in a free manner, making a number of additions which are aimed at strengthening the persuasive force of his message; cf. 5.29–42n.: ‘Father stranger, Penelope calls you (cf. 529, 544), the mother of Telemachus (addition; he links her to a person already known to ‘the beggar’). Her heart urges her to ask you about (cf. 509–11) her husband (an affectionate periphrastic denomination †), even though she has already suffered many sorrows (i.e., disappointments after false tidings). If she finds out that you tell the truth, she will give you clothes (≈ 549–50), which you badly need. Food you will get by begging in the city (addition).’

553–4 Though the vocative ‘father stranger’ is a common form of address, its use here, for the first and only time by Eumaeus, in juxtaposition to the – similarly unique – ‘the mother of Telemachus’ may be taken as dramatic irony † by the narratees.

561–73 Odysseus answers with a speech in ring-composition †:

A I could tell Penelope the whole truth.

(the ‘catch-word’ technique †: νημερτέα πάντ’ ἐνέποιμι picks up νημερτέα πάντ’ ἐνέποιμα: 556)
For I am well informed about him (561–3).
(note the typical *κείνου)
B But I fear the Suitors (564–5).
(this point has been prepared for in 513 and 530–1)
C For when that man [Antinous] hurt me, nobody protected me (566–8).
A' Therefore, let Penelope wait till evening and then interrogate me
about her husband,
(he mirrors Eumaeus’ affectionate periphrastic denomination † of 555)
   sitting near the fire. For you know how thin my miserable clothes are
   (569–73).

His speech is full of ambiguities †: he announces that he knows much about
Odysseus, because they suffered ‘one and the same sorrow’; he complains
that Telemachus did not protect him against the Suitors (whereas the narratees
know that he himself instructed his son not to act, should he be harassed); the narratees may hear an allusion to Odysseus’ name in
   ὃδυσσεός (567).

572–3 Odysseus’ mention of the fire is a seed †; it will play an important
role in ensuing events; cf. 19.55–9n. The remark itself is carefully prepared
for via a series of remarks about his wearing worn clothes and hence fearing
the cold; cf. 14.457–522; 17.23–4, and 191.

575–8 Penelope addresses Eumaeus as he steps over the threshold; a sign
of excitement (cf. 4.680). She is disappointed and even irritated, because ‘the
beggar’ does not heed her eager invitation. The function of the brief nega-
tive reaction is to add weight to her eventual praise of ‘the beggar’s’ clever-
ness (586).

578 As often, the speech ends with a *gnomic utterance.

580–4 Once again (cf. 553–9n.), Eumaeus gives a free rendering of his
message; 581 recapitulates 564–8, 582 resembles 570, and 583–4 are his own
addition, meant to convince the queen of the advantages of ‘the beggar’s’ proposal.

591–605 The final exchange between Telemachus and Eumaeus has
several functions. (i) It shows once more the latter’s characteristic devotion
to his master’s belongings and his paternal care for Telemachus. (ii) It
increases the tension, Eumaeus warning Telemachus of the Suitors’ bad
intentions and wishing for their death, Telemachus announcing that their
death will be his and the gods’ concern (‘catch-word’ technique †: Telemachus’ μελήσει picks up Eumaeus’ μελόντων in 594); two more *prolepses of the Suitors’ death. (iii) In the form of Telemachus’ order to come back the next day it prepares for Eumaeus’ re-entrance into the story in 20.162 (he will play an active role both during the bow-contest and the slaughter of the Suitors).

592 For whispering, cf. 1.156–77n.

606 For the indication of time, cf. Introduction.
Book 18 continues the thirty-ninth and longest day of the *Odyssey*: Odysseus boxes with the beggar Irus (1–157), Penelope appears before the Suitors and Odysseus (158–303), and ‘the beggar’ is again harassed by servants and Suitors (304–428). After that the Suitors go home to sleep and the stage is free for ‘the beggar’ and the queen to meet. Thus the three scenes are primarily a retardation †, postponing the direct confrontation between Odysseus and Penelope; cf. 17.492–606n. At the same time, they contain an important development of the plot: Penelope’s announcement that she will remarry, which will lead to her decision to organize the contest of the bow, which will offer Odysseus the – unexpected – means of carrying out his revenge; cf. 158–303n.

1–158 The ‘Irus’ scene belongs to a series of violent incidents between ‘the beggar’ and the Suitors or servants; cf. 17.360–506n. It also recalls 8.131–233, when Odysseus was challenged by Phaeacian youths to participate in their athletic contests and, despite his age and exhaustion, defeated them; the opposition ‘young’–‘old’ plays an important role in this confrontation, too (cf. 10, 21, 27, 31, and 52–3). Irus, who is younger than ‘the beggar’, is typically the champion of the young Suitors.

The scene is one of the burlesque parts of the *Odyssey*, comparable to the song of Ares and Aphrodite (8.266–366):† the Suitors enjoy the boxing contest as a form of entertainment, while the narratees may notice the parody of a typical battle-scene (the opponents exchange threatening speeches before their fight: 9–33; prepare themselves: 66–7; receive help from a god: 69–70; the defeated party ‘bites the dust’: 98a = II. 16.469a; and

the victor mockingly taunts his defeated opponent: 104–7; cf. esp. Il. 21.122). At the same time, there is a serious undercurrent discernible, in that Irus clearly resembles the Suitors (in his love of food and drink, the discrepancy between his outward appearance and inner quality, and his rude behaviour towards ‘the beggar’) and hence his ‘self-incurred’ downfall (cf. 73) may be seen as a prefigurement of the Suitors’ doom; in 235–42 Telemachus will explicitly link the fates of Irus and the Suitors.

His victory in the contest shows the Suitors ‘the beggar’s force; later – presumably on account of this experience – they will refuse to let him take part in the contest of the bow (21.285–310).

The whole scene is situated at the *threshold (cf. 17, 32–3), which, being the usual location for a beggar, symbolizes what Irus and Odysseus are wrangling over: the status of ‘the – one and only – palace beggar’ (cf. 48–9). By winning this fight and ‘conquering’ the threshold Odysseus has taken the first step towards regaining possession of his entire palace.

The confrontation between the real and the pseudo beggar provides a double instance of the *outward appearance versus inner quality* theme: the norm in the Homeric epics is that outward appearance and inner quality match, both positively (good-looking people are also brave and just) and negatively (a hunchback like Thersites also has a bad character); but there are also mismatches, and in the Odyssey increasingly so. Thus Irus is big but not strong (3–4), ‘the beggar’/Odysseus has the appearance of an old man but is in fact strong. Other instances of this theme are found in 8.169–77, 266–366; 15.403–84; 17.307–19, 454; 18.215–20; and 19.246nn.

1–8 The minor character Irus is introduced in a chunk of explicit narratorial characterization †, which is marked off by ring-composition: ἡ ληθές ἐγένσασθαι. The narrator focuses on those details which are relevant to what follows: Irus’ insatiable belly (which explains why he wants to chase a rival beggar from the palace and why Antinous will offer a sausage as prize), lack of bodily strength (which prepares for his panic at the sight of ‘the beggar’s’ muscles and his subsequent defeat), and position as the Suitors’ errand-boy (which explains why he acts as their ‘champion’).

Irus’ entrance on the stage is abrupt: instead of having him see Odysseus (cf. 1.328–9n.), the narrator says ‘there came Irus’; cf. 11.51, etc.; 13.221; 15.223; 17.212; 20.30; and Il. 23.65.

---

8. The narrator implicitly criticizes Irus’ behaviour through his *significant use of the possessive pronoun (‘he tried to chase Odysseus from his own palace’).

9–33. An instance of mock flyting (cf. 22.60–7n.):

Irus

A. Go away from the door
B. or I will drag you away by your foot.
A’. Don’t you notice how all urge me to drag you away. So stand up,
B’. lest we will quarrel with our hands.

Odysseus

A”. There is room for both of us here, who both are vagabonds.
B”. Don’t challenge me to a fight with hands, for I would stain your chest
and lips with blood.

Irus

B”’. My goodness, how the glutton/young pig [the meaning of μολοβρός is
disputed] rambles on like an old woman. I plan to hit him with both
hands and smash the teeth out of his jaws. Gird yourself, so that all can
see us fight. How could you fight with a younger man?

The possibility of ‘the beggar’ being dragged out of the palace by a foot has
been anticipated by Odysseus (16.276) and Antinous (17.479–80). In fact, all
the threats uttered here will come true for Irus: blood will fill his mouth, he
will drive his teeth together, and Odysseus will drag him out to the court-
yard by his foot (97–102).

11–12. Irus being urged on by the others was not recorded by the narra-
tor, a rhetorical instance of *emancipation of speech. He is of course ironic,
when he says that he is ashamed to do what the others are urging him to do.
Soon the irony will turn against him, however, when he is forced by the
Suitors to stand by his challenge (78–87).

23–4. The force of ‘the beggar/Odysseus’ threatening words is increased
– for the narratees – by his use of his own name. Behind the mask of a
beggar his true identity as master of the palace shows through; cf.
13.429–38n.

32–87. Instead of giving us Odysseus’ reaction to Irus’ challenge, the nar-
reator momentarily ‘freezes’ their quarrelling (32–3), in the form of an ap-
positive summary †, and switches to the Suitors (via a perception: Antinous
hears the two beggars: 34). Antinous draws the attention of his fellow-
Suitors to the quarrel which is going on and they assemble around the two
(thus making Irus’ words in 30 come true: ‘in order that all, including these
men, may see us fight’). Next he turns the quarrel into an official contest, stating the conditions (the winner may choose a sausage and acquires the exclusive begging ‘rights’ of the palace). Odysseus now accepts the challenge, claiming that, although it is not possible for ‘an old man worn with sorrows to fight a younger man’ (‘catch-word’ technique †: οὐ πῶς ἔστι νεωτέρος ἄνδρι μάχεσθαι echoes πῶς . . . ἄν σὺ νεωτέρῳ μάχοιο in 31), his belly urges him on (the *accursed belly’ motif), and adding a condition of his own (the Suitors are to swear not to help Irus). The Suitors take the required oath and Telemachus adds an extra assurance (‘whoever touches you will have to fight the others’), his ‘if your heart and spirit urge you’ (61) replacing ‘the beggar’s’ ‘my evil-working belly urges me’ (53–4). When Irus is gripped by panic, Antinous reproaches him for fearing ‘an old man, worn with sorrows’ (81; cf. 53) and adds a new condition (if Irus loses, he will send him to king Echesus to be killed in a cruel manner).

The quarrel between the two beggars makes Antinous laugh heartily. Indeed, from this point onwards, until their death in Book 22, there will be many instances of laughter of the Suitors or maids: 1 here and in 40 the Suitors are pleased with the prospect of entertainment; in 100 and 111 they laugh when Irus is so forcefully put in his place by ‘the beggar’ (Schadenfreude; cf. the Greeks’ laughter when Thersites is checked by Odysseus: Il. 2.270); in 320 the maids laugh at the beggar’s offer to tend the light; in 350 the Suitors laugh at the joke which Eurymachus makes at ‘the beggar’s’ expense; in 20.6–8 the maids on their way to their lovers laugh with each other; in 20.345–9 the Suitors’ uncontrolled laughter is that of lunatics; in 20.358 they laugh in Theoclymenus’ face when he prophesies their death and call him mad; in 20.374 they tease Telemachus, poking fun at his ‘guests’, a beggar and a mock prophet; in 20.390 they laugh as they prepare their dinner which – as the narratees know – will be their last; in 21.376 they laugh for the last time, on the occasion of Telemachus’ youthfully passionate but – in their eyes – impotent wish for their death. The Suitors’ laughter is a symbol of their blindness, their false sense of security. Contrast the smiles of Telemachus (16.476) and Odysseus (20.301–2), which, since smiles are always a true reflection of a character’s position (cf. 4.609n.), signal their superiority.

Antinous now looks at the arrival of ‘the beggar’ positively; con-
trast 17.446–52; note the substitution of ὑέζος for negative *δείμων. In 400–4 the Suitors will view it negatively again, because it disturbs their peace and quiet.

52–7 The wily nature of Odysseus’ speech (cf. 51) lies in his pretence that he stands no chance in the upcoming contest; he will make a similar dissimulating speech in 21.275–84.

55–66 The safeguards of the oath of non-interference and Telemachus’ pledge of assistance will prove to be unnecessary, since almost from the beginning the Suitors turn against their frightened ‘champion’ and are taken in by the victorious ‘beggar’; their function is to add to the surprising dénouement of the contest, the old beggar’s easy victory.

66–77 The sequence ‘Odysseus prepares himself, the Suitors are impressed, Irus is frightened, Irus is forced by Antinous to carry out his challenge’, resembles II. 7.206–18: Ajax arms himself, the Trojans and his opponent Hector tremble at the sight of him, but Hector realizes that he cannot back out, since he himself had challenged the Greeks.

66–70 Athena temporarily undoes part of Odysseus’ disguise: in 13.430 she made the flesh on his limbs shrivel, now she causes it to swell again.

71–5 An actual tis-speech gives expression to the Suitors’ collective focalization of what the narrator has just described in 66–9 (the muscularity of ‘the beggar’) and their reaction to it (they expect Irus to lose the contest).

82–7 When Irus has been defeated, the Suitors will announce the execution of this threat (115–16), but the course of events (their own death) will prevent them from doing this. For the threat to sell someone as a slave in a foreign country, cf. 17.249–50n. As in the case of Irus and his threats (cf. 9–33n.), the cruelties announced here by the Suitors will in fact backfire: it will be their servant Melanthius who is mutilated by Telemachus in the way described here (22.475–6 = 18.86–7).

90–4 The narratees – but not the other characters in the story – have Odysseus’ unspoken thoughts revealed to them. They are presented in an ‘indirect deliberation’ scene, of ‘whether’ form: the first – emotional – alternative (to kill Irus outright) recalls Odysseus’ suppressed impulse in 17.236 (to kill Melanthius) and represents what he would normally have done. The second alternative (to hit Irus only lightly) is dictated by reason and this is the course of action which he adopts. Here we find explicitly expressed what remains implicit in the other passages containing his
unspoken thoughts, viz. his motive for restraining himself: to prevent the Suitors from finding out who he is.

96–9 Odysseus’ victorious punch is described in the same realistic style as mortal woundings by spears in the *Iliad*; cf., e.g., 5.291–6, 305–10; or 16.345–50.

100 The *Suitors’ laughter is – uniquely – described in a metaphorical expression: ‘they died of laughter’; it aptly and ironically sums up their situation: they will die because of their witlessness and folly, symbolized by their laughter.

102–7 Odysseus mocks his defeated opponent: Irus would do better to ward off swine and dogs, instead of trying to be king of strangers and beggars, when in fact he is a good for nothing, lest he incur a bigger evil (viz. death; from 91 the narratees know how close Irus has already come to death).

110–23 His victory brings Odysseus the temporary sympathy of the Suitors: they collectively congratulate him on his victory in an *actual tis*-speech (110–17), Antinous gives him the prize, a big sausage (118–19; by bringing the sausage to ‘the beggar’ himself, he underscores his increased esteem for him), and the good Suitor Amphinomus adds bread, wine, and a benediction (119–23).

112–13 The Suitors’ collective benediction is an instance of dramatic irony †: they think that ‘the beggar’ wants most food, clothes, and a warm place to sleep, whereas the narratees know that it is the death of the Suitors; cf. 14.53–4n.

117 Odysseus takes the Suitors’ unintentional self-curse in 112–13 as a good omen; cf. 2.15–37n.

119–57 The scene between *Amphinomus and Odysseus belongs to the series of *warnings which the Suitors receive in the course of the *Odyssey*, but which they brush aside. Amphinomus is the tragic exception: he does take the warning seriously, but nevertheless cannot escape his doom.5

122–3 The same words are used by the loyal goatherd Philoetius in 20.199–200, characterizing Amphinomus as a decent Suitor.

125–50 Odysseus’ warning speech is a carefully constructed piece of rhetoric:6 *(captatio benevolentiae)* Amphinomus, you seem to be a sensible man *(marked off by ring-composition †: δοκεῖς πεπνυμένος εἶναι ≈ ἔπητῇ*
Therefore listen to what I have to say. (general proposition) There is nothing more feeble than man (*gnomic utterance), who, when life is prosperous, never reckons with the possibility of a change for the bad, but when this occurs, he endures this too (this last thought is somewhat loosely attached, but, as the narratees may note, very apt coming from ‘much-enduring’ Odysseus). For the mood of a man matches his fortune. (concrete example) For I too once was fortunate, but did reckless things. (general proposition) Therefore, let a man never be lawless, but be satisfied with what he has. (concrete example) Such reckless things as I see the Suitors doing, devouring the goods and dishonouring the wife of a man, (warning) who soon will come back. And he is very close by. But I hope that a god will lead you out of the palace, before that man takes his bloody revenge.’

Odysseus is in fact issuing several warnings: (to the Suitors) that their situation may change, that their reckless behaviour may lead to their downfall, and that Odysseus will come back, (to Amphinomus) that he should leave the palace. By telling the story of his life, ‘the beggar’ reverses Amphinomus’ words in 122–3: ‘I once was fortunate (δελβιος)’ (138) versus ‘may you get good fortune (δλβος) in the future’.

126–8 ‘The beggar’/Odysseus shrewdly presents his knowledge of Amphinomus’ father as hearsay.

138–40 A recapitulation of the *lying tale which Odysseus earlier told Antinous in 17.419–44. It is tailored to the new context: now ‘the beggar’ says that he committed ‘reckless deeds’ (whereas in the earlier version he ascribed the idea of going to Egypt to Zeus and put the blame for the disastrous outcome of that expedition on his companions), in order to strengthen the parallel with the Suitors and their ‘reckless deeds’. For this same reason, he inserts the detail of his ‘relying on his father and brothers’ (140), which is not found in the earlier version, but is appropriate to the Suitors, who rely on each other.

138 For this nostalgic use of ἐμελλων + present infinitive (‘I once was fortunate’), cf. 1.232–41n.

For καὶ γάρ introducing a paradigm, cf. 17.419n.

145–50 A combination of a *prolepsis of Odysseus’ return and a *prolepsis of the death of the Suitors. The narratees may savour the ambiguity † of ‘the beggar’s’ repeated ‘I think’, φημί in 145, διώ in 149 (which the Suitors will interpret as a modifier, but which they see as a sign of Odysseus’ determination); his claim that Odysseus ‘is very close by’ (which they know
is literally true); and his use of *(ε)κείνος for Odysseus in 147, 150 (when they know that he is in fact present).

155–6 A narratorial prolepsis † of Amphinomus’ death, which will take place in 22.89–98. It forms the narrator’s negative answer to Odysseus’ wish for this Suitor’s salvation in 146–8; note the typical contrast between Odysseus’ – here intentionally – vague *(δοκίμων versus the omniscient narrator’s concrete ‘Athena’. For the ‘good’ Suitor Amphinomus being punished all the same, cf. 17.360–4n.

Usually it is fate which ‘shackles’ mortals (cf. 3.269; 11.292, I. 4.517; 22.5), here it is Athena; the substitution underlines the active interest which this goddess takes in the punishment of the Suitors.

157 The *(he sat down on the seat from which he had risen’ motif underscores Amphinomus being doomed; he has no choice but to take up his position amongst the Suitors again (and share in their upcoming punishment).

158–303 A highly expanded *(Penelope leaves her room’ scene:7 (i) indication of why Penelope leaves her room (158–86; expanded with a dialogue between Penelope and Eurynome); she is beautified by Athena (187–205); (ii) Penelope comes down to the *megaron (206–7); and (iii) takes up a position near one of the central pillars, veiled and flanked by servants (208–11); the Suitors are smitten with desire (212–13); (iv) she addresses Telemachus (214–25); (v) receives an answer (226–43); (vi) engages in a discussion with the two leaders of the Suitors, which culminates in their giving her presents (244–301); and then (vii) retires to her room (302–3. For once, we do not hear that she weeps and is put to sleep by Athena, but instead that her servants carry the ‘very beautiful’ gifts to her room; this time her public performance has ended in a victory).

This scene employs the technique of silent characters †: we may assume that during the altercation between mother and son (214–43) the Suitors are present (cf. οἴδε in 232), and Odysseus during the whole scene (cf. 162 and 281–3). Indeed, the main function of this scene is to form the next stage in the protracted reunion of Odysseus and Penelope: Odysseus is allowed to watch his wife in action from a distance; cf. 17.492–606.

What do Odysseus and the narratees see? Not a Penelope who is flirting

---

with her Suitors (cf. 163–86, 182–6, 187–99nn.), but a Penelope who shrewdly employs a – not necessarily false – promise to remarry in order to elicit gifts from them (cf. 250–83n.).

158–68 An abrupt change of scene † leads to Penelope in her upper room. As so often, it is Athena who takes the initiative in giving the story a new direction. In the present case this results in a remarkable instance of double motivation †: first, *Athena’s embedded focalization discloses to the narratees the goddess’ motive (160–2; shifter δπως + optative), then, Penelope’s speech to Eurynome reveals her motive (164–8). Usually the motives of mortal and god coincide, here they do not: Athena wants Penelope to fan the Suitors’ desire for her and (thereby) make her more esteemed by her husband and son; Penelope has no real motive (as she did in 16.409–51, when she needed to talk to the Suitors about their murderous plans against Telemachus), but she simply feels an unprecedented impulse to meet the men she so loathes (her embarrassment is reflected in her smiling εχρειον, literally ‘without a need’, but the exact meaning is disputed). She tries to give her impulse some sort of motivation by adding that she might take this opportunity to talk with Telemachus (which she will indeed do).

Though unaware of Athena’s intentions, Penelope will in fact fulfil them: she will fan the Suitors’ desire (cf. 212–13 and 244–9) and increase her husband’s esteem for her (cf. 281–3). Athena’s hidden agenda in this scene may be compared to that in 3.77–8; 17.360–4; 18.346–8; and 20.284–6; the goddess often has larger goals in mind when making mortals do a particular thing.

163–86 The scene between Penelope and Eurynome is an instance of the *rejected suggestion* device, which here has both a characterizing function (Penelope’s emphatic rejection of Eurynome’s suggestion to beautify herself shows that she is free from coquetry; cf. 158–303n.) and a structural function (it raises the issue of beautification, which will recur in the next scene).

---

8 Contra Kayser (1881: 41, ipsa regina ad artes meretricias descendit) and Felson-Rubin (1994: 55).
The dialogue has domino form †:

Penelope  A  I feel an unprecedented desire to appear before the Suitors (164–5).
   B  I may also tell my son not to converse with the deceitful Suitors (166–8).

Eurynome  B’  Go and talk to your son (170–1),
   (‘catch-word’ technique †: σῶ παιδί ἔτος φᾶσιν παιδί...κεν ἑπτομί ἔτος in 166)
   C  but first wash and anoint yourself, for it is time you ended your eternal grieving (172–6).

Penelope  C’  No, I won’t wash and anoint myself (178–81),
   (‘catch-word’ technique: χρωτ’ ἀπονιπτεσθαι καὶ ἐπιχρίεσθαι echoes χρωτ’ ἀπονιψαμένη καὶ ἐπιχρίσασα in 172)
   D  but call Autonoe and Hippodamea to accompany me (182–4).

166–8  For the relation between Penelope’s announcement here and her actual dialogue with Telemachus, cf. 214–43n.

168  For the Suitors’ unspoken thoughts, cf. 16.448n.

175–6  Eurynome is not the first to note *Telemachus’ coming of age, but here her emphatic reference to the fact that the youth has ‘started to grow a beard’ is a seed †: in 269–73 this will turn out to be the moment ‘prescribed’ by Odysseus himself for Penelope’s remarriage (176 ≈ 269).

182–6  When she descends to the megaron, Penelope is always escorted by two servants (cf. 158–303n.); a specific use of the *not alone’ motif. Here, this custom is explicitly motivated (‘I feel shame to meet the Suitors alone’) and fleshed out (we are given the names of the servants); once again, Penelope’s chastity is emphasized (cf. 158–303n.).

187–99  The scene of Athena beautifying Penelope covers the time between the moment when Eurynome sets out to get the two servants (185–6) and their return (198–9); an instance of the ‘fill-in’ technique †.

This *‘beautification’ scene displays the usual characteristics: Athena is the beautician, the beautification precedes an important appearance (Penelope must fan the Suitors’ desire, 160–1, recalled in 191, and will be seen by Odysseus for the first time in twenty years), and the onlookers react with admiration (in this case: sexual desire, 212 and 245–9). It differs from the other Odyssean instances in that (i) only here it concerns a woman, and (ii) the process takes place while Penelope is asleep. Ad (i): like her male
counterparts, Penelope is made taller and thicker (195; cf. 6.230 = 23.157, 8.20, and 24.369), but otherwise the treatment is adapted to her femininity (her face is cleaned with ambrosia and her skin made whiter than ivory; cf. *Il*. 14.166–77, esp. 170–1). *Ad* (ii): this detail is added to free Penelope from any suspicion of coquetry (cf. 158–303n.); earlier she had emphatically rejected a suggestion to beautify herself (178–81), and now Athena’s beautification takes place without her knowing it. For this reason, we will find κόμα (201) next to the more common ὑπνος (188, 199) to indicate her sleep; this word refers specifically to a deep sleep, which makes people oblivious to what is happening around them (its only other occurrence is *Il*. 14.359, where Hypnus signals to Poseidon that the coast is free, since Zeus is covered by κόμα and hence will notice nothing).

187 The *'X thought of something else’ motif marks the unexpected – though, after 160–1, not unlogical – nature of Athena’s intervention, which counteracts Penelope’s explicit refusal to beautify herself.

201–5 Penelope’s speech serves mainly to remind the narratees once again of her unfailing loyalty to Odysseus, just prior to her announcement to remarry. The terms in which she describes her own predicament recall those used in connection with Odysseus (*δένυμένη: cf. 5.153 and passim; αἵλονα φθινύθω: cf. 5.160–1).

Penelope’s wish to die is an anticipatory doublet † of 20.58–90. For the close relation between sleep and death, cf. 13.73–92n.

212–49 An example of the ‘interruption’ technique †: we hear about the Suitors and their erotic feelings (212–13), but there ensues a dialogue between Penelope and Telemachus about an entirely different subject (214–43), and only then do we return to the Suitors, one of whom voices their erotic feelings (244–9). The effect is to make the narratees aware that all the time Penelope is talking to her son she is being watched by the Suitors.

212–13 The only other time we find a reaction of the Suitors to Penelope’s appearance (1.366), it is placed *at the end of* the ‘Penelope leaves her room’ scene; its early placement here signals the success of Athena’s plan in 160–1.

214–43 After 166–8 one would expect Penelope to warn Telemachus against associating with the untrustworthy Suitors; instead she angrily rebukes him for allowing ‘the stranger’ to be mistreated. There is, however, a connection between the two speeches, in that both times Penelope refers to
Telemachus’ interest: it would be ‘more profitable’ (κέρδιον: 166) for him not to associate with the Suitors versus he used to think ‘more profitable’ things (κέρδεκα: 216) when he was still a child.

The dialogue has parallel form †:

Penelope  A (evaluation) When you were a child you were more sensible, but now that you have grown up and become a handsome man your mind is less sound (215–20).

   (ring-composition †: 220 ≈ 215)

B  (past) For you let the stranger be maltreated (221–2).

C  (future) If something should happen to the stranger as a result of mistreatment, this would bring shame on you (223–5).

Telemachus  A’ (evaluation) I do not blame you your anger at this. But [I do not agree with your conclusion] I notice everything, good and bad. Before I was still a child (228–9). But I cannot think of sensible action in all situations, for these men drive me out of my mind and I have no helpers (230–2).

B’ (past) But, at least the fight between ‘the stranger’ and Irus did not turn out as they wished; for he [the stranger] was stronger (233–4).

C’ (future) I pray that the Suitors will suffer the same fate as Irus (235–42).

215–20 Penelope’s rebuke is a combination of the *'outward appearance versus inner quality' theme and the ‘you used to be sensible, but now you have lost your mind’ motif (cf. 4.31–2n.).

218–19 Penelope’s bitter ‘an outsider would consider you the son of a fortunate man’ recalls Telemachus’ own words of 1.217–18 and 232–3.

221–4 With ‘this deed’, ‘thus’ to be treated shamefully’, and ‘on such an occasion’ Penelope is most likely referring to Antinous’ throwing a footstool at ‘the beggar’ (17.472–5), the incident which earlier triggered her indignation in 17.492–504.

227–42 Telemachus talks to his mother about the Suitors in their presence, intending them to overhear what he says (as indeed they will; cf. 245–9n.); an instance of indirect dialogue †.

Although he stresses that he is no longer a child (the *Telemachus coming of age’ motif), he persists in his role of helpless youngster; cf. 17.1–25n. The narratees know that in fact he does have a helper (Odysseus),
and is part of an ingeniously thought-out revenge scheme against the Suitors, and that his passivity when Odysseus was hit by the footstool was a conscious act of restraint (cf. 17.489–91).

235–42 Telemachus’ prayer to Athena and Apollo is one of many *prolepses of the Suitors’ death. He wishes that the Suitors might share Irus’ fate, bowing their heads and having their limbs loosened (νεύσων κεφαλάς οὐ κεφαλή, λελυτο γυία νυία λέλυνται), in their case not because they are groggy but because they are dead. For the relation Irus–Suitors, cf. 1–158n.; for the ‘Apollo’ motif, cf. 20.276–8n.

243–4 The appositive summary † ‘thus they were talking to each other’ (which implies that they continue talking) followed by the rare speech-introduction containing the names of both speaker and addressee suggests that Eurymachus is abruptly breaking in on the conversation between Penelope and Telemachus.10

245–9 Eurymachus now verbalizes the collective feelings of the Suitors, as they were earlier described by the narrator in 212–13 (cf. 212–49n.): (A) ‘If all Greeks saw you, there would be even more Suitors dining in your palace’ (an implicit reaction to Telemachus’ speech; note the echo ἐν ὑμετέροις δόμοισιν: 247 ἐν ὑμετέροις δόμοισι: 236),11 (B) ‘for you surpass all women in beauty and intelligence’. His choice as their spokesman is logical in view of his position as the strongest marriage candidate (cf. 15.16–18) and his diplomatic talent (cf. 1.367–424n.).

In typically Homeric fashion, Penelope’s beauty is evoked indirectly (through the Suitors’ infatuated reaction) rather than described; cf. 9.233–57n.

250–83 The structure of Penelope’s speech is as follows: *(bitter reaction to Eurymachus’ flattery) (B’)* The gods destroyed my beauty on the day Odysseus left for Troy (‘catch-word’ technique †: εἴδος picks up εἴδος in 249). *(brief moment of hope) (A’)* If only Odysseus came back and took care of me again, then my kleos would be greater. *(return to reality)* But the truth is that I suffer many sorrows. When he left Odysseus said to me: “My wife, I do not know whether I will return. Take care of my house and parents. But when you see that Telemachus starts growing a beard, remarry.” That moment has now arrived. Very soon, unhappy me, I will remarry. *(implied

---

request) But this sorrow has reached my heart. This (makes a gesture) was not the traditional way of wooing, when suitors vied with each other in offering gifts instead of devouring the substance of another man.’

Penelope’s speech contains a spectacular instance of *emancipation of speech: nowhere has her announcement that the moment has come for her to remarry been prepared for. The narrator offers the narratees only a neutral speech-introduction (250) and Odysseus’ focalization (‘he was pleased because she was enchanting them, but her mind was set on other things’) as capping of her words (281–3), and this has spawned much controversy over their interpretation. (i) Is she once more leading the Suitors on, making an insincere promise to remarry, and is the speech of Odysseus which she quotes in 259–66 her own invention?¹² (ii) Or is she sincere, and the quoted speech true?¹³ (iii) Or are the narratees intentionally being left in the dark?¹⁴ (iv) Or is she perhaps both insincere and sincere? The presence of the formulation νόος δέ οι διλαμενοίνα (283), which earlier occurred in connection with the ruse of the web (2.92; 13.381), leaves the narratees no choice but to conclude that she has something up her sleeve. The fact that this expression occurs as part of Odysseus’ embedded focalization suggests that her deceit has to do with him. Thus it seems most likely that it is the speech by Odysseus which is deceitful. The fact that in her private and confidential conversation with ‘the beggar’ Penelope makes no reference to these instructions (cf. 19.130–61 and 524–34nn.), later confirms that they were her invention. She invents these instructions in order to convince the Suitors that this time she is sincere when she announces that she will remarry, which in turn allows her to ask – indirectly but unmistakably – for gifts. At the same time, the announcement to remarry itself will soon prove to be sincere, representing the first step towards surrender; cf. 19.570–81n. Even if Odysseus did not actually speak the words quoted, Telemachus’ coming of age and thereby becoming the master of the oikos is the moment when she will have to find a new husband. Whereas earlier she used the trick of the web to postpone a remarriage, here she uses the trick of


Odysseus’ ‘instructions’ to sell her skin dearly at the moment a remarriage can no longer be avoided.

251–3 Here (and in 180–1 and 19.124–6) Penelope is speaking symbolically: when Odysseus left, life lost its lustre for her; cf. Andromache who in II. 22.468–72 drops the headdress which became hers on her wedding day as a symbol of the end of her happiness, now that Hector has died. Penelope’s beauty is still intact, as may be gathered from her being compared to goddesses (cf. 17.37n.), the male concern that she might ruin her beauty (cf. 2.376n.), and the Suitors’ desire (in 212–13 after a beautification; in 1.366 without the ‘help’ of a beautification).

The narratees may note the dramatic irony † of her claim that the gods destroyed her beauty, when they have just heard about Athena beautifying Penelope (187–97).

254–6 Like all of Odysseus’ philoi, Penelope hovers between hope and resignation; cf. 1.158–68n. Only the narratees (and of the characters present, Telemachus and Odysseus) know that what Penelope considers an ‘unattainable’ wish (Odysseus’ return) has in fact already become reality, and that the ‘unescapable’ reality (a life of sorrows) will soon belong to the past.

257–71 A – spoof – instance of the *‘Odysseus departs’ motif. Penelope also deftly employs the *‘speech within a speech’ device: the Suitors hear Odysseus’ instructions as it were from his own mouth.

269–70 For Penelope’s perspective on her remarriage, cf. 1.249–50n.

281–3 A *speech evaluation which takes the form of embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘he was pleased, because . . .’); cf. 422; II. 12.80 = 13.748. For the interpretation, cf. 250–83n.

292–301 The Suitors’ gifts are presented in the form of a *catalogue containing four items, each of which consists of three elements (name of Suitor, gift, ‘he/they brought’), and a summary presentation of the rest of the Suitors (‘each brought another gift’). The gifts are not utensils (cf. 4.125–30), but the typical attributes of a beautiful woman (jewellery and clothing). Because it is these gifts which heighten Penelope’s honour in the eyes of her husband and son (cf. 161–2), the narrator pays ample attention to their value (‘gold’: 294, 296; ‘amber’: 296), beauty (292, 300, 301, 303), and lustre (‘like the sun’: 296; ‘much charm radiated from it’: 298).

304–5 A summary † speeds us through the remainder of the day.
This *sunset, stressing the darkness of night, is contextually apt, in that it leads naturally to the next scene, in which braziers are lighted.

Whereas in 1.423–4 the Suitors left the palace after sunset, here, in accordance with the slowing down of the narrative rhythm (cf. Introduction to 17), they remain, and another series of incidents with ‘the beggar’ take place before they go back home (428).

The scene begins with servants lighting the braziers. This action is only rarely recorded by the narrator; cf. 19.63–4. It is mentioned here in order to prepare for (i) Odysseus’ speech 313–19, in which he offers to take over the maids’ task of tending the braziers; and (ii) Eurymachus’ joke at his expense in 351–5. Odysseus’ motive for offering his services is not indicated by the narrator, but can easily be supplied: he needs a pretext for staying in the palace until he can talk to the queen (cf. 17.569–72); cf. 19.24–30, where Telemachus uses the chore of holding the light as a pretext to keep ‘the beggar’/Odysseus inside the palace.

The scene between ‘the beggar’ and Melantho (i) informs Odysseus about this servant’s disloyalty (cf. 16.304–20n.), and (ii) forms part of a series of confrontations between Odysseus and bad servants (cf. 17.204–60n.). His bad experiences with Melantho (here and in 19.60–102) serve to explain why in 19.343–8 Odysseus will refuse to be washed by a young servant.

A unique speech-introduction calls attention to the dramatic irony †: ‘divine much-contriving Odysseus himself spoke amongst them’, i.e., amongst ‘the servants of Odysseus’, as they are emphatically called by both narrator (311) and ‘the beggar’ (313). With this introduction the narrator sets the tone for Odysseus’ speech, which is full of ambiguities.

Odysseus once more plays his role of humble beggar, this time offering to perform menial tasks (tending the light); an instance of the *‘labour’ motif, which has been prepared for in 15.322, when ‘the beggar’ said to Eumaeus that he might do jobs for the Suitors such as making a fire or carving the meat. At the same time, his real status as master of the house sounds through in the authoritative way in which he orders the servants away; cf. 13.429–38n. The discrepancy between status and tone will not go unnoticed by his addressees (cf. 329–31).

For the narratees, who know the speaker’s true identity, Odysseus’ speech is full of ambiguities †: his calling Odysseus ‘your long absent master’ (313); his assurance that the Suitors will not ‘defeat’ him (319),
which the maids will take to mean ‘wear out’, but the narratees may connect with the upcoming revenge; and his referring to himself as πολυτλήμων (319), which the narratees may connect with one of his stock epithets (cf. 1.205n.).

320 The maids laugh and are surprised (‘look at each other’) at the incongruity between ‘the beggar’s’ authoritative speech and his humble status. Soon their *laughter will turn to fear and things will happen exactly as he said (they go away: 340–2 and he tends the lights: 343–5).

321–6 Melantho is introduced by a chunk of explicit narratorial characterization †, which is marked off by ring-composition (σίχρως ἐννιτται ἐνευίτεν ὀνειδειοῖς ἐπέσσοι). The narratees learn that this attractive maid (note the epithet ‘with fair cheeks’) has put the affection of her mistress Penelope to shame by sleeping with the Suitor Eurymachus; this prepares us for her shameful treatment of her master Odysseus in the sequel. For maids sleeping with the Suitors, cf. 20.6–8.

327–36 Melantho’s abusive speech combines (i) the “the beggar” is acting above his station’ topic, and (ii) the “the beggar” will meet with violence’ topic; cf. 17.217–32n. It has a parallel form †:

A      Stranger, you are crazy (327),
B      since instead of going out to sleep in a place where you belong, you stay here and talk boldly amongst a multitude of men (328–31a).
A’     You are either drunk, empty-headed, or euphoric because of your recent victory (331b–333).
B’     Take care lest a stronger man than Irus throw you out of the palace (334–6).

Her suggestion that ‘the beggar’ should go to sleep in a smithy or a public meeting place forms her disrespectful variant of the hospitality ritual of offering a stranger a bed; cf. Introduction to 17.

331 For ‘the beggar’s’ alleged drunkenness, cf. 21.288–310n.

337–9 In his angry reaction, Odysseus counters Melantho’s claim that he is speaking above his station (so is she; ‘catch-word’ technique †: οἱ ἀγορεύεις ≈ πόλλα ἀγορεύεις) and her threat of physical violence (he will tell Telemachus, who will cut her to pieces).

340–5 Odysseus’ words strike home and the scene ends ominously, recalling the end of the scene with Amphinomus (153–7): the maids take his
threat seriously and are stricken with fear, Odysseus broods on his revenge (on the maids).

Once more, we find an instance of *Odysseus’ unspoken thoughts: he performs his task of tending the braziers, but inwardly is thinking ‘other things’, about which the narrator reveals that they ‘did not remain unfulfilled’. Odysseus will again anticipate his revenge on the maids in 20.5–24; it will follow in 22.435–73 (at the hands of Telemachus).

346–428 The second of three ‘pelting’ scenes; cf. 17.360–506n. We find the familiar elements, but with variations in content and order:

346–8 Athena incites the Suitors to insult Odysseus, in order to increase his anger.
349–64 Eurymachus taunts ‘the beggar’, first indirectly (making a joke about his baldness) and then directly (inviting him to work for him).
365–86 Odysseus reacts with a defiant speech.
387–93 Eurymachus reacts with an abusive speech and a violent action, which frightens but does not hurt Odysseus.
399–404 The other Suitors react with irritation at their meal being spoilt.
405–9 The onlooker Telemachus reacts with an angry speech: the Suitors are behaving like madmen.
410–21 The Suitor Amphinomus reacts with a pacifying speech: Telemachus’ angry reaction is justified and the Suitors had better go home and leave ‘the beggar’ to the care of his host Telemachus.
422–8 Execution of Amphinomus’ suggestions.

346–8 *Athena’s embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘she did not allow to’) informs the narratees about the function of the upcoming scene. Her focalization triggers character-language †: λόβη, ‘outrage’ (twelve times in direct speech, here and 20.285 in embedded focalization), and *θυμαλγής, ‘grievous’.

349–64 For the device of ‘two successive speeches by one speaker’, cf. 5.21–42. Its effect here is to mark the change of addressee (instead of talking about ‘the beggar’ to the other Suitors, an instance of indirect dialogue †, in his second speech Eurymachus addresses ‘the beggar’ himself), and to allow for the insertion of a new speech-introduction (356), which, referring to Odysseus by his epithet ‘sacker of cities’, underscores the insulting nature of
Eurymachus’ ensuing words: unwittingly he invites a famous hero to work as a day-labourer for him.

350 For the Suitors’ laughter, cf. 35n.

351–5 Eurymachus makes a joke at ‘the beggar’s’ expense, calling his arrival a stroke of good luck, since his bald head reflects the lights and hence functions as a kind of lamp. The narratees, however, may detect the dramatic irony † of ‘not without the will of the gods did this man come to Odysseus’ palace’.

357–64 Like Melanthius before him (17.223–8), Eurymachus suggests that ‘the beggar’ might work for him and thereby earn food and clothes, immediately adding that of course he will be too lazy to do so; an insulting use of the *‘labour’ and *‘gift of clothes’ motifs.

366–86 ‘The stranger’/Odysseus answers with a highly rhetorical speech, which starts off from Eurymachus’ taunt that he is too lazy to work (‘catch-word’ technique †: ἔργοιο picks up ἔργον in 363), and then, via a series of hypothetical situations, gradually works towards the climax of Odysseus’ return and revenge:

If only (ἐὰν ἔριξα) we had a harvest contest . . . (no apodosis) (366–70).
Or if (ἐὰν δ’ αὖ) we had a plough contest . . . then you would see me (τῷ κέ μ’ ἵδοισ) . . . (371–5).
Or if (ἐὰν δ’ αὖ) there were a war . . . then you would see me (τῷ κέ μ’ ἵδοισ) . . . (376–9)
and you would no longer abuse me because of my belly (380; a back-reference to 364).
But you behave insolently and think you are powerful and forceful, only because you converse with few men and not courageous ones (381–3).
But if (ἐὰν δ’) Odysseus came back . . . then the door would be too narrow for you trying to flee (384–6).

By stressing his physical prowess in harvesting and ploughing, Odysseus expands on what he said (to Eumaeus) in 15.317–24, and this is the climax of the *‘labour’ motif. Coming to speak of his prowess as a warrior, he almost gives himself away (though ‘the Cretan’ has a heroic past, too: 17.419–44), even more so when he fantasizes about Odysseus’ return and revenge; cf. 13.429–38n.

384–6 A *prolepsis of Odysseus’ return, in the form of a hypothesis.

394–428 For Amphinomus’ sympathetic role here, cf. 16.394–9n. Seating himself near Amphinomus’ knees suggests that Odysseus is turning to him as a kind of suppliant, and hopes for his protection. Amphinomus will do as is expected of him in his speech in 414–21.

394–8 Eurymachus throwing a missile at Odysseus, but hitting the wine steward instead recalls the Iliadic pattern of a warrior missing his target but killing another man instead, often the charioteer (e.g., *Il.* 16.466–9, 731–43). The heroic parody is continued in ‘(the cup) fell to the ground clashing’ (cf. *Il.* 13.530 and 16.118, used of a helmet and a spear, respectively) and ‘(he fell) on his back in the dust’ (cf. *Il.* 13.548; 15.434; and 16.289).

400–4 The Suitors collectively give expression to their feelings in an *actual* *tis*-speech: they are irritated because their meal has been disturbed by the arrival of ‘the beggar’; contrast their joy at his arrival at the beginning of this book (36–9). Only the narratees know that the Suitors soon will have even more reason to wish that the stranger ‘had died somewhere else before coming here’ and that there will be even less ‘enjoyment of a good meal, because bad things prevail’ (a *gnomic utterance at the end of a speech); an instance of the *‘disturbed meal’* motif.

405–9 Odysseus had instructed Telemachus in 16.274–80 either to endure in silence or to address the Suitors with gently admonishing words, should they harass him. The first time his son reacted with silence (17.489–91), this time with a speech which is only partly in accordance with his father’s instructions: he angrily criticizes the Suitors’ behaviour, yet shows self-restraint when he says he will not drive anyone away from the palace.

Calling the Suitors mad (*ματανάσσον*) and accusing them of having (eaten and) drunk too much, he counters their abuse of ‘the beggar’ (cf. 390–3).

410–11 For the Suitors’ reaction, cf. 1.381–2n.

412–21 *Amphinomus makes an end to the altercation and the violence, by (i) calling Telemachus’ reaction ‘justified’ (his focalization differs from that of the other Suitors; cf. 411); (ii) exhorting his fellow suitors to stop maltreating ‘the beggar’ or any other servant; (iii) suggesting they offer a libation and go home; and (iv) handing over the stranger (who in 395 had sought refuge at his knees) to the care of Telemachus.

418–27 A standard instance of the *‘collective libation’* type-scene: (i) proposal (418–19); (ii) approval (422); (iii) preparation (423–5); (iv) libation (425–6); (v) concluding formula (427).
428 The type-scene of *‘retiring for the night’ is split up: here the Suitors retire (allowing for a private conversation between Odysseus and Telemachus in 19.1–46); in 19.47–50 Telemachus will retire (allowing for a private conversation between Odysseus and Penelope in 19.51–599); in 19.600–20.4 the hostess Penelope will retire and a bed will be prepared for ‘the guest’/Odysseus.
This book recounts the evening of the long thirty-ninth day (cf. Appendix A), which brings the removal of the arms (1–52) and the conversation between ‘the beggar’ and the queen (53–604).

The reunion of Odysseus and Penelope\(^1\) is the longest and most intricate instance of the *‘delayed recognition’* story-pattern: after she has communicated with ‘the stranger’ via a messenger in 17.492–606 and he has watched her in action in 18.158–303, they now finally meet. We have the elements of (i) the other person spontaneously starting to talk about the unrecognized person and topics which are relevant to him (124–61); (ii) the unrecognized person testing (44–6; cf. 13.336) and being tested (215–19; 23.113–81); (iii) the telling of a lying tale (165–299); and (iv)–(vii) Penelope’s recognition of *absent* Odysseus (185–257). At the very moment when Penelope seems about to penetrate Odysseus’ disguise, the narrator veers off and inserts Euryclea’s recognition (317–507), which is carefully kept hidden from Penelope. Therefore this evening does not bring the recognition of Odysseus by Penelope, which will not take place, after a set of dreamed/fantasized reunions (20.1–121), until 23.1–296.

Why this late reunion and why is Penelope excluded from the revenge scheme (cf. 13.192, 403; 16.303, 457–9; 19.476–90; in fact, her exclusion starts back in 4.830–7, when the Dream refuses to tell her about Odysseus)? Neither the narrator nor Athena nor Odysseus provides a reason, and this ellipsis † has led to a great deal of speculation. The following factors would seem to play a role. (i) The late reunion of husband and wife allows the nar-

rator many instances of dramatic irony, pathos, and suspense (notably during their nightly conversation), a highly unexpected dénouement (Penelope becoming Odysseus’ accomplice without knowing it, when she announces the contest of the bow), and a fitting climax to his story, which as far back as line 1.13 mentioned Odysseus’ longing for his wife (narratorial motivation †). (ii) Even though Agamemnon has assured Odysseus that Penelope is no Clytemnestra (11.444–6), and Odysseus receives nothing but positive reports about her (from Anticlea in 11.181–3 and most recently from Athena in 13.336–8 and 379–81), there is still the general untrustworthiness of women (11.454–6) and the example of Helen, who, either treacherously or stupidly, called to the Greeks inside the Wooden Horse, thereby almost ruining their plans (4.274–89). In other words, Athena and Odysseus do not assume Penelope to possess the same self-control as Odysseus and Telemachus, and fear that – in her joy – she might betray Odysseus’ presence in the palace before the moment of revenge (first actorial motivation †). Her poised behaviour during the final reunion will show how much goddess and husband have underestimated her! (iii) Odysseus does not want to burden her with the anxiety of his risky undertaking, just as in 2.373–6 Telemachus decides to leave her uninformed about his trip to Pylos and Sparta, and in 21.344–53 sends her to her rooms just before the slaughter of the Suitors (second actorial motivation).

The interview has been structurally and thematically anticipated in Odysseus’ nocturnal conversation with Arete, during which he is also asked for his name (cf. 7.229–347n.), and his conversation with Eumaeus, in which his interlocutor also displays a mixture of growing pessimism concerning the ‘absent’ Odysseus, in the face of repeated announcements of his return, and growing affection for ‘the beggar’ (cf. Introduction to 14). In the case of Penelope, these two emotions are worked out even more forcefully: first ‘pitiful’ (253), the ‘stranger’ becomes ‘respectful’ and ‘dear’ (254), indeed ‘most dear of my guests’ (351); she promises him her friendship and gifts (310); praises his good sense (350–2; cf. 17.586–8); asks his advice (509–53); and only reluctantly breaks off their delightful talk (589–90). At the same time, she keeps on denying that Odysseus will come home, even in the face of ever stronger indications that he will. Thus, although she feels attracted to ‘the stranger’, she never comes to identify him with Odysseus and at the end of their conversation announces her decision to organize a bow-contest to decide whom she will marry. Odysseus plays his role of
stranger brilliantly, feigning hesitation when necessary (221–4, 237–40) and suppressing his emotions (209–12), while at the same time managing to pay Odysseus a number of compliments (240, 267, and 285–6).

Scholars have found it difficult to believe that Penelope fails to realize who the beggar is and have suggested that (i) two versions of the story have become conflated, one in which Odysseus did reveal himself to his wife and together with her planned the bow-contest (cf. the version which the Suitor Amphinomus gives in 24.167–9) and one in which he did not, or (ii) Penelope does – subconsciously – recognize Odysseus but does not let on.

Both analyses rob the story of its force and brilliance; the first is further contradicted by Odysseus’ efforts not to be recognized (209–12, 390–1, 507), the second by Penelope’s continued despondency (e.g., 20.61–82) and scepticism (e.g., 23.59–68).

This is one of the ‘conversation’ books of the *Odyssey* (cf. Books 1; 4; 13; 14; and 23, and for the *Iliad*, Book 9): it contains thirty-four speeches, which together take up 419 of the 604 lines. In general, the Homeric epics contain a great deal of direct speech: the *Iliad* 45 per cent, the *Odyssey* (including the *Apologue*) 68 per cent. In books like these we see why Homer was called the father of tragedy.

1–52 This scene, marked off by ring-composition † (‘Odysseus remained in the *megaron*, brooding with Athena on the death of the Suitors’: 1–2 = 51–2), brings the next phase in *Odysseus’* revenge. In typically Homeric fashion (cf. 5.1–42n.), Odysseus does not refer back to his plan to remove the arms from the *megaron* (16.281–98), but simply repeats it, in part *verbatim* (5–13 = 16.286–94). This ‘removal of the arms’ is a well-known crux of Homeric scholarship, because of discrepancies with (i) the earlier plan, and (ii) the later course of events. To a large extent, however, these discrepancies can be given sense. Ad (i): in the earlier plan Odysseus announced that he would give Telemachus a signal (a nod of his head) when it was time to remove the arms, whereas now he gives that order

---

4 Plato Resp. 598d, 607a, Aristotle *Poetics* 1460a5–11, and Bassett (1938: 61–70).
verbally and helps to execute it. The explanation for this discrepancy seems to be that he has changed his mind because of a change of circumstances (for this phenomenon, cf. 15.150–9n.): at that stage, he could not foresee that he would be invited by the queen to stay in the palace for the evening (17.507–88), and hence would have a moment alone with Telemachus. Another discrepancy is Odysseus’ omitting the precaution of leaving two sets of arms, one for himself and the other for Telemachus (cf. 16.295–8). Here there is no ground for Odysseus to change his mind and we may be dealing with a change of heart on the part of the narrator, who in this way creates a suspenseful scene during the slaughter of the Suitors (Telemachus has to fetch his armour, forgets to close the door of the armoury, which allows the Suitors to arm themselves too; cf. 22.99–202n.). *Ad (ii):* the excuse which Odysseus (twice) ‘dictates’ to his son, to explain the removal of the arms to the Suitors (*speech within a speech* device), is never put to use, since they do not notice their absence upon entering the *megaron.* In defence of this apparently useless element it may be said that it (a) shows us Odysseus’ characteristic foresight, (b) is partly ‘recycled’ in his conversation with Euryclea in 17–20, and (c) is an instance of misdirection †: the Suitors will discover the disappearance of the arms at a much more dramatic moment (in 22.24–5), when it will be too late to ask Telemachus for an explanation.

7–13 This imagined speech contains dissimulation (Telemachus pretending to be concerned about the Suitors hurting each other) and an instance of the *‘left behind’* motif (7–8). It ends, as often, with a *gnomic utterance* (‘iron out of itself attracts a man’).

15–30 Between Odysseus’ order to Telemachus (4–13) and their joint execution of it (31ff.), we find a brief dialogue between Telemachus and Euryclea, in which he asks her to detain the servantwomen in their *megaron* while he removes the arms. This scene serves several functions. (i) Practical: some of the maids are collaborating with the Suitors and hence must not know about the removal of the arms. Their absence also offers Telemachus a pretext to keep ‘the beggar’/Odysseus in the palace until his meeting with the queen, since he has to hold the light (cf. 18.307–428n.). (ii) Structural: briefly foregrounding Euryclea, the scene prepares us for her major role in 317–507. It is also an anticipatory doublet † of the shutting up of the maids in their quarters during the slaughter of the Suitors; cf. 21.380–7.

Telemachus again plays the responsible and stern young master of the
house (cf. 17.1–25n.): his father’s weapons must be protected from smoke (18–20) and ‘the beggar’ must earn his bread (27–8; the *‘labour’ motif). His performance meets with Euryclea’s approval (22–3) and speechless amazement (29).

The narratees may savour the dramatic irony † of Euryclea’s wish that Telemachus will ‘once assume the same foresight in taking care of the house and protecting all its possessions’ (22–3).

33–43 In the end, it is not ‘the beggar’ who holds the light, as Telemachus suggested to Euryclea, but the goddess Athena, who carries her own golden lamp, which, as Telemachus’ focalization in 37–9 suggests, gives more light than an ordinary brazier, and, having the radiance of a fire, makes visible the walls, pillars, and roof beams. Telemachus reacts to the sudden flood of light as to an epiphany, i.e., with amazement (θαυμάζε: 36; cf. 1.319–24n.), and infers the presence of a god, an inference confirmed by Odysseus. Note the typically vague ‘a god’/‘the gods’ of the mortal characters (40, 43) versus the omniscient narrator’s exact ‘Pallas Athena’ (33). Apparently, neither Telemachus nor Odysseus actually sees Athena. As Odysseus explains to his son, ‘this (i.e., moving around invisibly) is the manner of the gods’; cf. 13.312–13n. Through her intervention the goddess demonstrates her support for the two ‘warriors’ Odysseus and Telemachus; cf. Il. 5.4 or 18.206, where she spreads a light from a warrior’s head or armour.6 This auspicious light should be contrasted with the inauspicious darkness in which the Suitors will be wrapped in 20.345–57 (when the same walls and pillars will appear ‘smeared with blood’).7

44–6 Having been invited by Penelope to meet her and be questioned about her husband (17.507–90), Odysseus now takes the initiative and announces to Telemachus that the ensuing interview will also be a *test (ἐρεθίζω) on his part. He will test her loyalty towards Odysseus (103ff.), and the disposition of the female servants towards beggars (60–95).

47–52 Odysseus’ instructions in 44–6, (A) ‘you lie down to sleep, but (B) I will stay here’, are executed in parallel order †: (A’) Telemachus lay down, but (B’) Odysseus remained in the megaron. This order allows the second element to develop into a new scene.

For Telemachus’ lying down as part of a split ‘retiring for the night’ typescene; cf. 18.428n. The – rare – detail that Telemachus returned to the

---

bedroom ‘where he was wont to sleep before, whenever sweet sleep reached him’ (the only parallel is Il. 1.610) marks (i) Telemachus’ first night in his own palace after an absence of about a month, and (ii) the contrast with Odysseus, who has not properly come home and cannot retire to his own bed yet.

53–604 A special instance of a Penelope leaves her room’ scene (the queen is not making a public appearance before the Suitors, but is having a private conversation with ‘the beggar’; hence we find only the typical concluding lines: 600–4). The scene consists of four parts: preliminary altercation between Melanthe, ‘the beggar’, and Penelope (53–102); conversation between queen and ‘beggar’ part one (103–316); Odysseus’ footwashing and recognition by Euryclea (317–507); and conversation between queen and ‘beggar’ part two (508–604). This is an instance of the ‘interruption’ technique †: at the end of the first conversation a topic is broached (Odysseus’ imminent return), which is dropped during the interval of the footwashing, and then resumed again for full development in the second part.  

We find a triadic structure † of announcements of Odysseus’ return and denials on the part of Penelope, who twice cuts short further discussion (cf. 14.112–409n.):

‘the beggar’  
(first announcement) I have heard about Odysseus in Thesprotia and swear that he will return this lukabas (268–307).

Penelope  
(first denial) Odysseus will never come home again (309–16).  
(cutting short) Maids, wash him and give him a bed (317–19).

Odysseus in dream  
(second announcement) I have come back and will kill all the Suitors (546–50).

‘the beggar’  
This is how the dream must be explained: all the Suitors will die (555–8).

Penelope  
(second denial) The dream is false (560–9).

‘the beggar’  
(third announcement) Odysseus will come back before the Suitors are able to string the bow (585–7).

Penelope  
(does not react to this announcement, which amounts to a third denial)  
(cutting short) Let us sleep (589–99).

9 Besslich (1966: 20–3).
53–102 Preliminary altercation:

Melantho Do you intend to go on bothering us even through the night (66–7a),
(the ‘beggars are a burden’ topic; cf. 17.217–32n.)
ogling the women (67b)?
(a new point, triggered by the fact that night now has fallen)
(threat) Go away, lest you be hit by a torch (68–9).
(the ‘the beggar will meet with violence’ topic; cf. 17.217–32n.)

Odysseus Why do you assail me? Is it because I am a beggar (71–4)?
(warning paradigm) I was once a wealthy man, but Zeus ruined me (75–80).
(threat) Take care lest you, too, lose your airs (81–2).
(a dig at the woman who had just accused him of ‘ogling’)
Your mistress might punish you or Odysseus. Or if he is dead, there is Telemachus. None of the maids who are acting recklessly escape his attention (83–8).

Penelope Brazen dog [= Melantho], your insolent behaviour does not escape my attention (91–2a),
(‘catch-word’ technique †: οὗ τί... λήθεις picks up οὗ τίς... λήθει in 87–8)
(threat) for which you will pay with your head (92b).
You know very well that I intend to question ‘the stranger’ about my husband (93–5).

Penelope Eurynome, prepare a seat, so that I can interview ‘the stranger’ (97–9).

This scene (i) is an instance of retardation †, in that it postpones the meeting between Penelope and Odysseus, which the narratees have been waiting for since 17.507–90; (ii) brings the testing of the maids, which was announced by Odysseus in 44–6n.; and (iii) prepares for the footwashing by Euryclea, in that ‘the beggar’s refusal to be washed by a young maid (343–5) is clearly the result of his present abuse by Melantho.

54 For the double comparison, cf. 17.37n.

55–9 The narrator adds weight to this charged moment, the first dialogue between ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ in twenty years, through retardation †, which takes the form of the (dynamic) description † of an object: in a
passage which is marked off by ring-composition † (ἐνθ’ . . . ἐφίζε ἀρ κοθέζετ’). He narrates the history, i.e., fabrication, of Penelope’s chair.

The location of her chair, ‘near the fire’ is a seed †: Odysseus, who sits near the queen and hence also near the fire (cf. 388–9), will in 390 turn away from it (towards the darkness), in an unsuccessful attempt to hide his scar from Euryclea; in 506–7 he will draw his chair nearer to the fire again, this time taking care to hide his scar beneath his rags.

61–2 Whereas the preparation of the tables is usually recorded in some detail (cf., e.g., 1.109–12), their clearing is rarely mentioned, and then only briefly (7.232). Here the narrator inserts the detail in order to stress, once more, the Suitors’ feasting. This seemingly neutral remark can be taken as an implicit criticism; cf. 17.169n. This interpretation is strengthened by the explicit *narratorial intervention ὑπερμενέωντες; strictly speaking, this epithet, a ἡπαξ, could be taken positively ‘of exceeding strength’ (= ὑπερμενής, an epithet of Zeus, amongst others), but in view of the wealth of negative ὑπερ-epithets attached to the Suitors (cf. 1.224–9n.) it is more likely to take it negatively, as ‘overbearing’.

65–8 The narrator himself explicitly – and critically – notes that the bad maid Melantho chides ‘the beggar’ ‘for the second time again’; cf. 18.310–45.

75–80 A highly abbreviated version of the *lying tale which Odysseus told Antinous in 17.419–44. Since Penelope is present at the scene between ‘the beggar’ and Melantho, it is possible to take his words as being directed to the queen as well (an instance of indirect dialogue †);10 ‘the beggar’ informs her about his former status, thus starting to construct an image of himself as a reliable person.

86 For the ‘Apollo’ motif, cf. 20.276–8n.

89–99 The *‘two consecutive speeches by the same speaker’ device here (i) marks Penelope’s switch from Melantho to Eurynome, whom she asks to prepare a comfortable seat for ‘the stranger’ (countering Melantho’s suggestion that he should go away), and (ii) allows Penelope to mention twice her intention to question the stranger about Odysseus (once to Melantho: 94–5, once to Eurynome: 99). Again we are dealing with indirect dialogue †; ‘the stranger’ is reminded (cf. 17.553–4) of the reason for their interview.

Penelope does not send her maids away and we must assume that they remain present as silent characters † (cf. 121, 317, 372: αῖδας, and 601–2).11

For the symbolic significance of Odysseus here being offered a διόροι, cf. 17.339–41n.

Penelope conforms to Homeric etiquette by starting the conversation with the *identification of her guest:

Penelope A Who are you and where do you come from (104–5)?

‘the beggar’ B (compliment) Your kleos reaches heaven and you are like a just king (107–14).

A’ (refusal) Therefore ask me everything but don’t press me to tell my name (115–21).

(he tries to deflect attention from himself and turn to Odysseus as soon as possible, in order to test Penelope, cf. 44–6, and to provide her with information, cf. 15.314)

Penelope B’ (rejection of compliment) My beauty was ruined on the day Odysseus left. If he came back, my kleos would be greater. But in fact I have many sorrows. A host of suitors are wooing me and therefore I cannot properly take care of strangers, suppliants, and heralds (124–36).

(‘catch-word’ technique †: κλέος picks up κλέος in 108)

C (her predicament) I have kept my suitors at bay for three years through the trick of the web, but now everyone is urging me to remarry (137–61).

A” But tell me all the same who you are (162–3).

‘the beggar’ A”’ (answer) There is a country Crete, on which live many different people and on which are ninety cities. One of these cities is Cnossus, where Minos once reigned and now my father Deucalion. My name is Aethon (172–84).

107–14 Odysseus’ compliment, which is intended to sweeten the bitter pill of his refusal to mention his name, takes the form of a *‘role reversal’ simile. Penelope is compared to a man, a king, in fact the kind of just and gentle king that Odysseus is himself (cf. 2.229–34n.). It points to what the Odyssey is about: Odysseus’ homecoming and the re-establishment of his rule, which will restore stability and peace on Ithaca (cf. 24.482–6).


107 The narratees may savour the ambiguity † of the ‘beggar’ addressing Penelope (here and in 221, 555) with γυναι, which can mean both ‘woman’ (e.g., 6.168) and ‘wife’ (e.g., 4.148 and 23.183). His other vocative is ‘venerable wife of Laertes’ son Odysseus’ (165, 262, 336, 583), which is only once used by another speaker (Theoclymenus, in a speech in which the return of Odysseus is announced: 17.152). The Suitors, of course, never call her this, but instead speak of ‘daughter of Icarius, circumspect Penelope’ (16.435; 18.245, 285; 21.321), a formula which is also used by Agamemnon (11.446), ‘the beggar’ (17.562), and the narrator (1.329; 18.159; 20.388; 21.2).

108 For Penelope’s kleos, cf. 2.125–6n.

115–21 Odysseus uses similar arguments to avoid mentioning his name as on Scheria: telling his name means telling the story of his life, which will make him cry (cf. 7.208–15), tears which Penelope and her maids will dismiss as drunken sentimentality (cf. 9.2–15); cf. again 167–70.

118 The narratees may detect an allusion to the stranger’s real identity in πολύστονος (only here in the Odyssey, only here of a living being); cf. 1.205n.

121–2 Here the ‘beggar’ hypothetically envisages being accused of drunkenness; for actual accusations, cf. 21.288–310n.

124–61 Penelope’s speech is an instance of the dramatic irony † which is typical of the ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern; cf. 4.104–12n. Unaware of the true identity of her addressee, she spontaneously starts talking about subjects which are of relevance to him: her loss of beauty on the day Odysseus left, the Suitors who woo her against her will, her trick with the web to postpone a remarriage, and her present dire straits.

124–9 For these lines, cf. 18.251–3 and 254–6nn.

128 For Penelope’s kleos, cf. 2.125–6n.

130–61 The ruse with the web having failed, Penelope concludes that she has run out of tricks and can no longer escape *remarriage. She does not repeat Odysseus’ instructions to remarry (18.259–70), but merely refers to the pressure on her from her parents and Telemachus; this suggests that the instructions were her invention. Her despondent conclusion is the second step in the process of her decision to surrender; cf. 570–81n.

134–6 Penelope feels hampered in her role of host through the presence of the Suitors, as does Telemachus; cf. 15.513–17n.

138–56 The narratees already know the story of Penelope’s web, but Odysseus does not, which explains its repetition; cf. Agamemnon’s report of
his dream to the other generals in *Iliad* 2.56–71, after it had already been recounted by the narrator. For a comparison of the three versions, cf. 2.93–110n. Whereas Antinous had recounted the story in order to show how Penelope is prolonging the wooing by the Suitors, she tells it to illustrate that she is at her wit’s end; cf. 130–61n.

163 By means of a proverbial expression Penelope adds weight to her repeated request to the stranger to reveal himself; cf. Alcinous in *Iliad* 8.550–4.

165–299 Odysseus’ *lying tale to Penelope – uniquely – consists of three separate parts (165–202, 221–48, and 268–99); the division allows the narrator to record each time Penelope’s emotional response (204–19, 249–60, 308–16). In the course of the three instalments, Odysseus comes closer, both chronologically (from Odysseus twenty years ago to Odysseus now) and geographically (from Crete to Thesprotia); this process will culminate in Penelope’s dream in 535–53, in which he finds himself in the palace.

Odysseus makes use of many of his stock elements (cf. Appendix E), especially those which he used before in his tale to Eumaeus (14.192–359). When we compare the two versions, however, it becomes clear that in the present one he spends much less time on ‘himself’ (‘the Cretan’) than on Odysseus, even to the extent that the story of ‘the Cretan’s’ adventures becomes – strictly speaking – incomprehensible (but not to the narratees, who have heard the earlier, fuller versions). Of all Odysseus’ lying tales, this one contains the most facts. Odysseus again pretends to be a Cretan (*fiction*), but this time he is not just the son of a rich man (cf. 14.199–206), but the son of the king. This minor change of course serves to win the queen’s confidence. Again he is associated with Idomeneus (*fact*), being now his brother (*fiction*), but this time he does not accompany the latter to Troy, of course so as to be able to entertain Odysseus, who on his way to Troy is driven off course to Crete (*fiction*). His name is Aethon (only here and in 24.306 does he give himself a name). The fact that he remained home is carefully accounted for by his being younger than Idomeneus. The second part of his tale contains a description of Odysseus’ clothes (*this must be fact, in order to convince Penelope*) and the herald Eurybates (*fact*; cf. *Iliad* 2.184). When ‘the stranger’ picks up his tale a third time in 268, he suddenly finds himself in Thesprotia (*fiction*). No word about his vicissitudes during the intervening twenty years, nor how he had come there (in the version which he told to Eumaeus a storm had brought him there: 14.299–319). He again pretends to have heard from the Thesprotian king about Odysseus (*fiction*), and now
expands the information that the latter is amassing wealth. This expansion is necessary in order to explain why Odysseus is not home yet. He adds hearsay reports on Odysseus’ Thrinacian and Phaeacian adventures (facts). He repeats from his earlier version the information about Odysseus presently being in Dodona (fiction). His tale ends with the announcement of Odysseus’ return, without explaining how he himself, while on his way to Doulichion (fiction), ended up on Ithaca, or why he is clad in rags (in 14.334–59 he said that he had been kidnapped by pirates).

165–71 Odysseus’ tale is, typically, preceded by an *emotional preamble, in which he stresses the pain it causes him to tell his story. His formulation in 170 recalls the proem of the Odyssey itself (1.3–4: πολλῶν... ἀνθρώπων... ἀστέω... πάνεν ἀλγεῖα), a signal to the narratees that the ensuing lying tale will closely resemble Odysseus’ own story.

172–3 ‘The Cretan’ begins his tale with the *there is a place X’ motif; the main tale is resumed, as usual, with ἔνθε, ‘there’ (185).

185–207 A special instance of the *delayed recognition’ story-pattern: (iv) ‘the Cretan’ tells Penelope that he has met Odysseus (185–202); she reacts with tears (203–9) but also with (v) scepticism and (ii) puts his report to *the test (213–19); (vi) ‘the Cretan’ produces ‘tokens’ (225–48); (vii) after which she is convinced and cries even more (249–51). For the combination of tears and scepticism, cf. 23.32–8 n. For the combination of test and tokens, cf. 23.166–230 n.

185–202 The Cretan’s anecdote about Odysseus is told in ring-composition †:

B I once entertained Odysseus (185).

A For on his way to Troy he was driven off course to Crete, anchored his ships at Amnisus, and went out looking for Idomeneus, who, however, had already left for Troy (186–93).

B’ So I entertained him (194–202).

(the second time this event is told in detail)

‘The Cretan’ is recounting the adventures of another person (Odysseus), but uses a great deal of emotional character-language †: *χαλέπως, ‘difficult’ (189, 201), *ἐνθυκέως, ‘kindly’ (195), and *δαμνών, ‘a god’ (201).

187 For the topos of being blown off course at Cape Malea, cf. 4.514 n.

203 The narrator seldom explicitly notes that Odysseus is telling a lying
tale (cf. only 13.254–5), counting on his narratees to notice this themselves. The unique speech-capping which he uses here leads up to – and explains – Penelope’s strong emotional reaction. It also explicitly calls attention to the fact that Odysseus’ present lying tale contains many facts; cf. 165–299n.

204–12 Like most long narratives in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus’ lying tale triggers a *reaction from his addressee: Penelope weeps (204–9a). Her tears in turn trigger an emotional reaction on the side of Odysseus (209b–212).

The behaviour of ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ – note the telling periphrastic denominations † ἐνδραγ and γυναικα – is described in parallel but contrasting vignettes: Penelope openly weeps, as she always does in the *Odyssey*, her weeping being expanded through a simile; Odysseus exercises his celebrated self-restraint and represses his tears, his hard-wrung composure being underlined through comparisons. The dramatic irony † of the situation is pointed out explicitly by the narrator: Penelope weeps over her husband ‘who in fact was sitting next to her’ (209). The *significant use of the possessive pronoun •Òn underscores this irony, just as •Æn in the next line underscores the pathos. For the various ways in which Odysseus hides his tears, cf. 17.304–5n.

204–9 As so often in Homer, a metaphor (Penelope ‘melted’) triggers a comparison/simile (‘just as snow melts . . .’); cf. 6.157–67; 20.13–16; 21.48–50; and *II*. 4.274–82. ‘Snow’ similes in Homer are used mainly of large quantities (missiles/helmets: *II*. 12.156–60, 278–89; 19.357–61, words: *II*. 3.222), once of speed (*II*. 15.170–2). Though we are here – uniquely – dealing with melting snow, there is again the suggestion of mass (cf. ‘are full’: 207 and ‘wailing accompanied by many tears’: 213); Penelope’s face is all tears. In view of the fact that the same metaphor was used earlier of Odysseus’ flood of tears at the Phaeacian court (8.522), it seems less plausible that the melting snow would also suggest that Penelope’s scepticism concerning Odysseus’ return is diminishing and that she is beginning to cheer up after the long ‘winter’ of his absence.13 On the contrary, her scepticism about her husband’s return remains constant; hearing about him in the past only makes her miss him all the more. The metaphorical use of ‘to melt’ in 136 and 264 is slightly different, in that there it means ‘wasting away through grief’.

216 For this type of sceptical ἐλ ἐπεδε ἔιν + indicative, cf. 23.36n.

218–48 In 218–19 Penelope asks three question (‘Tell me (A) what sort

13 So Fränkel (1921: 33).
of clothing he wore, (B) what kind of man he was himself, and (C) about his companions’), which Odysseus answers in parallel order †:

(*emotional preamble*) It is difficult for me to tell you, because it was twenty years ago since he visited me. But I will tell you as he seems to me in my heart (221–4).

A’ Description of Odysseus’ cloak, brooch, and chiton (225–35).

B’ Speculation about the origin of Odysseus’ clothes, which ends with a reference to what a special and honoured man he was (236–43).

C’ Description of Eurybates (244–9).

Odysseus’ speech, the second instalment of his lying tale (cf. 165–299n.), is a masterpiece of rhetoric, in that he (i) pairs dissimulation (‘it was a long time ago and I may not remember all details’: 221–3, ‘I do not know who gave Odysseus these clothes’: 237–9) with the accuracy of an eyewitness account (‘I have seen the chiton myself’: 232), and (ii) adroitly pays Penelope an indirect compliment when he remarks how the Cretan men and women admired Odysseus’ brooch and chiton (229, 235), which — as he knows and the narratees will soon hear — she had given him on his departure (255–7).


228–31 The description † of the brooch is both static and dynamic: after a brief indication of the scene depicted on it (228–9a: a dog holds a struggling fawn in its front paws and throttles it), we look at it again, now through the admiring eyes of the onlookers, who turn it into a little story (230–1: the dog throttles the fawn, while the fawn, eager to escape, thrashes its feet). Likewise, in the case of Achilles’ shield in Iliad 18, the narrator’s admiring focalization (cf. 18.549) narrativizes the scenes on the shield.

Since the Suitors are elsewhere compared to fawns (4.335–9 = 17.126–30), it is tempting to interpret the scene on the brooch as an implicit prolepsis †: it foreshadows Odysseus’ killing of the Suitors; cf. Odysseus being compared to a dog in 20.14–16.14

14 Rose (1979: 224).
Three *hapax legomena* in one line ensure that ‘the Cretan’ is giving a highly particularized, and hence trustworthy, description of his negro (?) herald. Eurybates is an instance of the *’outward appearance versus inner quality’* theme: he is ‘bent in the shoulders’, but ‘knows sensible things in his mind’.

Penelope’s reaction to the second part of Odysseus’ lying tale consists of even more (cf. 204–9) tears (now those of recognition; cf. 185–257n.), a declaration that ‘the stranger’ has become ‘dear and respectable’ to her, a confirmation of his ‘tokens’, immediately followed by a pessimistic announcement (‘but I will never welcome Odysseus home’).

Penelope’s excited revelation that it was she who gave Odysseus the clothes comes as the climax of the ‘stranger’s’ – feigned – speculations in 237–40 (‘I do not know whether this clothing had come from home, or whether a friend gave it to him, or a guest-friend’). Penelope is in fact one of many women who provide Odysseus with clothes; cf. 5.263–8n.

The little vignette of Penelope ‘packing her husband’s suitcase’ is an instance of the *’Odysseus departs’* motif.

Whereas Eumaeus had focused his abhorrence of the Trojan War on the figure of Helen (cf. 14.68–71), Penelope’s centres on the city of Troy itself. According to the *’nomen est omen’* principle (cf. 1.48–62n.), she even refrains from using the hated name of ‘Troy’, but rather coins a new name Κακοίλιον, which gives expression to her loathing; for this type of neologism, cf. Ἀϊρος “Αἴρος (18.73), μήτερ…δύσμητερ (23.97), and Δυστορί (II. 3.39; 13.769).

The structure of the third instalment of Odysseus’ lying tale is a complex ring-composition †:

(preamble) Don’t cry, though I don’t blame you for crying over a man like Odysseus. But stop crying and listen to me (262–8).

A I have heard *nearby* in Thesprotia about Odysseus’ *nostos*, (he is)*alive* (269–72a).

B He is *assembling riches* (272b–273a).

C (the past) He lost his companions near Thrinacia and he himself was brought back to Greece by the Phaeacians (273b–282a). (explanation for the fact that Odysseus needs to be conveyed by the Thesprotian king and wants to assemble riches)

B’ He could have been home by now, but wanted to *assemble riches* (282b–287).
A’  The Thesprotian king will convey him home. Odysseus is presently in Dodona. So he is nearby and alive and will soon come back. I swear to you that he will come back this luka̱bas (288–307).

For the wordplay ὄδυσσεο-Odysseus in 265 and 275, cf. 1.48–62n.

262–8  Odysseus shows more sympathy for Penelope’s tears than Telemachus did in 1.345–55; whereas the latter played down Penelope’s grief (‘you are not the only woman to lose her husband’), Odysseus, using an a fortiori argument, fully condones it (‘any woman would mourn her husband, let alone that his husband is godlike Odysseus’).

263–4  For the motif of ‘Penelope ruining her beauty’, cf. 2.376n.

269  For a speaker announcing to tell the truth, when in fact he is embarking on a lie, cf. 1.179n.

270–87  ‘The stranger’ expands the information which Penelope has already received in 17.525–7 from Eumaeus (who, in his turn, had heard it from ‘the stranger’ in 14.321–6).

273–82  A mirror-story †, which takes the form of repeating analepses †: Odysseus gives a summarized account of the Thrinacian (12.260–425) and Phaeacian adventures (Books 6–13), which here he presents as following directly upon each other, whereas in reality his seven-year stay with Calypso intervened. He does not want to confront his wife with this erotic adventure; when he does mention the nymph in his later report to her, he will present an expurgated version (cf. 23.333–7).

275  For the wordplay ὄδυσσεαν-Odysseus, cf. 401–9n.

281–4  In order to explain why Odysseus has not come home yet, ‘the Cretan’ comes up with the perfectly acceptable excuse of the hero wanting to accumulate wealth; cf. Menelaus in 3.301–2, 4.81–91 and his suggestion to Telemachus in 15.80–5. Odysseus carefully exculpates the Phaeacians: they ‘were willing themselves to escort home Odysseus unharmed’, but in fact they only got as far as Thesprotia, because the hero wanted it so (cf. 13.277, where the good intentions of the Phaeacians = Phoenicians are also stressed).

285–6  An instance of the ‘no other could vie with X . . .’ motif.

313–34  Penelope still (cf. 134–6) feels that the absence of Odysseus makes it impossible for her guest to be received properly (she cannot provide ‘the stranger’ an escort to his next destination), but by now he has become so dear to her that she wants to extend hospitality to him as best she can: now a provisional washing and bed, the next day a proper bath, so he
can take his place as a guest next to Telemachus (for this honorary position, cf. 3.39n.). She also promises him protection against further insults from the Suitors. The following morning will bring only a partial fulfilment of her words: Telemachus will give ‘the beggar’ a – humble – place and will himself promise to protect him (20.257–67), but – of course – no bathing takes place (this must wait until after the killing of the Suitors) and the Suitors once more behave aggressively towards ‘the beggar’.

315 For the nostalgic idiom ‘if ever he (really) was’, cf. 15.268n.

317–507 Interruption (cf. 53–604n.): the footwashing and recognition by Euryclea. This passage offers a variation on the ‘bathing’ element of the ‘visit’ type-scene (cf. Introduction to 17) and a special variant of the *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern. It starts with Penelope remarking that ‘the stranger’ is the same age as Odysseus and that Odysseus’ hands and feet must by now look like those of ‘the stranger’ (358–60). Euryclea, (i) spontaneously talking about Odysseus in Odysseus’ presence, surpasses her mistress with a summary priamel †: ‘many visitors have come, but none resembled Odysseus so much in stature, voice, and feet as the Cretan’ (363–81). After a shrewd reaction by Odysseus (‘that is what everyone says’), which for the time being averts the danger of recognition, Euryclea starts washing his feet and, despite Odysseus’ precaution of turning away from the (light of the) fire, immediately (iv) recognizes his scar, which thereby functions as (vi) an unsolicited ‘token’ (392–470). (vii) Her eyes fill with tears, but the usual emotional reunion is precluded by Odysseus, who asks for his nurse’s secrecy (471–507). The scene has been anticipated in the Trojan tales of Helen (Odysseus, entering Troy in disguise, is recognized by Helen) and Menelaus (inside the Trojan horse Odysseus forcibly silences Anticlus); cf. 4.234–89n. It will be recapitulated by Euryclea in 23.73–7.

317–60 The transition to the footwashing is accomplished as follows:

Penelope

A Servants, give the stranger a wash (317a)
B and prepare a bed for him. Tomorrow Telemachus will take care of him (317b–324).
C For how else, stranger, could you find out whether I truly am an excellent host (325–34)?

---

15 Büchner (1931) and Hölscher (1939: 69–73), in addition to literature mentioned in notes 2 and 3.
‘Stranger’
A’ and I don’t care for a footwashing. No maid of yours will touch me, unless it were an old one. Her I would not grudge to touch my feet (343–8).

Penelope
D You are very sensible (350–2).
A” Your feet will be washed by Odysseus’ old nurse (353–6).

For Odysseus’ bedding, cf. Introduction to 17.

325–34 Penelope’s diatribe on the ‘harsh’ versus the ‘excellent’ host refers back to ‘the stranger’s’ compliment to her in 107–14 (cf. kleos in 333) and adds relief to ‘the stranger’s’ surprising refusal of the hospitality here so graciously offered to him. It is a special variant of the ‘a guest will remember his host at home’ motif: the guest will tell everyone about the excellence of his host.

325–6 For the allusion in περίεμι . . . ἐπιφρῶν to Penelope’s epithet περίφρων, cf. 1.205n.

343–8 Odysseus’ refusal to be washed by any of the maids except an old one is the result of the insulting behaviour of Melantho (65–95 and 18.321–36), as Euryclea realizes (370–4); it is paralleled by his refusal to be bathed by Nausicaa’s servants in 6.211–23 (though his motive there is a different one). Odysseus’ attempt not to be recognized (390–1) and his shocked reaction when he is nevertheless recognized (479–90) make it clear that his request for an old servant is in no way intended to result in a reunion with Euryclea.

353–8 Penelope first gives a description of Euryclea, using the ‘there is a person X’ motif, before disclosing her name. The description serves to show ‘the stranger’ that she fulfils his requirement (she is old, indeed, feeble), while at the same time informing the narratees that she was Odysseus’ nurse, thus preparing for her role in the digression on the scar (esp. 401–12).

358 For a moment it appears as if Penelope will say ‘wash your master’s feet’. This kind of wordplay is typical of the Odyssey; cf. 14.174; 15.388; and 16.99–101.

361–81 Euryclea’s speech offers the most complex instance of the type of dramatic irony † whereby a character spontaneously starts talking about the unrecognized person, who is in fact sitting before him/her (cf. 4.104–12n.). First (363–8), she apostrophizes the absent Odysseus. Since the
narrator did not mention an addressee in the speech-introduction, the narratees will at first think that she is addressing ‘the stranger’. Only when she starts talking about her addressee’s piety, illustrious son, and return does it become clear that she is referring to Odysseus. Thus, for a brief moment the two figures merge. Next (370–4), she compares their fate (σῶτω...ζ...), now addressing ‘the stranger’ and referring to the absent Odysseus by the customary *κεῖνος. Finally (379–81), she comments on ‘the stranger’ s’ physical likeness to Odysseus.

363–9 For Euryclea’s conviction that Odysseus is dead, cf. 1.158–68n.
380–1 Whereas in 359 Penelope had talked about Odysseus’ resemblance to ‘the stranger’, Euryclea now notes the resemblance of ‘the stranger’ to Odysseus. Just before recognizing him altogether, perceptive Euryclea (cf. 385) already comes dangerously close to seeing through *Odysseus’ disguise. This does not mean that the disguise is forgotten, rather the narrator deliberately heightens the tension.

388–91 Only now, when it is about to play a vital role in the story, does the narrator tell us that Odysseus has a scar;16 an effective instance of paralipsis †. Odysseus’ – apprehensive – embedded focalization † (shifter: μή + optative) alerts the narratees to the danger of recognition inherent in the scar, thus increasing the suspense.

392 Through the periphrastic denomination † ‘her master’, reinforced by the *significant use of the possessive pronoun, the narrator underlines the dramatic irony † of Euryclea unwittingly – though not for long – washing the feet of her master.

392–468 In a long external analepsis † the history behind Odysseus’ scar17 is recounted, in the form of an epic regression †:

C Euryclea recognized the scar (392–3a),
B which a boar once inflicted on Odysseus, when he had gone to Parnassus, to Autolycus, his maternal uncle, and his sons (393b–398).
A This Autolycus once visited Ithaca, gave Odysseus his name, and

promised that when his grandson came to visit him, he would give him gifts and send him home happy (399–412).

A' Odysseus visited Parnassus, participated in a boar-hunt, and was hurt. Having healed him, Autolycus gave him gifts and sent him home happy (413–62a; 460–1 φ11015 412).

B' Having come home he told his parents how a boar had inflicted a scar upon him, when he had gone to Parnassus with Autolycus and his sons (462b–466; 465–6 φ11015 393–4).

C' It was this scar which Euryclea recognized (467–8a).

This is a prime example of the Homeric tendency to create *suspense through retardation †: the place of the story (after Euryclea’s recognition, but before her reaction) and Euryclea’s important role (it is she who put the baby Odysseus on his grandfather’s knees and, more remarkably still, asked him to give the child a name) ensure that the narratees will not forget the main story; knowing that Odysseus fears recognition (cf. 388–91), they remain on tenterhooks for seventy lines. The passage can be analysed as Euryclea’s embedded focalization † (shifter ‘she recognized’: 392): this is what goes through her mind the moment she sees the scar. Possible objections are that (i) Euryclea is referred to by her name in 401, where one would expect a mere ‘she’ (but for this phenomenon, cf. Il. 24.585), and (ii) she has not been present at the events at Parnassus and hence could not know about them (but she has heard about them from Odysseus himself, who upon his return ‘told well his story’: 464–6).

The scar will function thrice more as a *‘token’, σήμα (21.217–22; 23.73–7; and 24.331–5).

399–466 Odysseus’ youthful exploit adds a new element to his ‘biography’: cf. 1.255–64n.

401–9 The scene of the name giving is an excursus within the analepsis on the scar; it is relevant to the main context, however, in that it prepares for Euryclea’s words in 474–5 (‘You verily are Odysseus [the hated one], my child, since not even I recognized you immediately’).

All instances of the verb ὀνομαζωμαι in the Odyssey concern Odysseus: 1.62; 5.339–40, 423; 19.275–6.18 Here we are explicitly given to understand

that his name is meant to recall this verb. Like Eumaeus in 14.147 (who refers to Odysseus as ‘the gentle one’), Euryclea had a non-ominous name in mind for him (‘much prayed for’: 404).

420–5 A highly abbreviated *‘sacrifice’ type-scene.


476–502 Athena and her protégé work in harmony to ensure that Odysseus’ incognito revenge scheme is not endangered by Euryclea’s discovery: the goddess diverts Penelope’s attention (479a) and Odysseus silences his nurse with deed (479b–480) and word (482–502). Athena’s intervention underlines once more Penelope’s exclusion from the revenge scheme; cf. Introduction.

The structure of the altercation between Odysseus and Euryclea is as follows:

**Odysseus**

A

Old woman, why do you want to kill me? I have come back (482–4).

B

But you must be silent about this (485–6).

(transition) For I tell you this (487):

C

when I have defeated the Suitors (488),

D

I will kill you together with the other maids (489–90).

**Euryclea**

A’ Child, why do you speak thus (492)?

B’ Of course, I will keep my mouth shut (493–4).

(transition) But I tell you this other thing (495):

C’ when you have defeated the Suitors (496),

D’ I will tell you the names of the good and the bad maids (497–8).

**Odysseus**

D” Old woman, why do you say this? This will not be necessary, for I will find out myself (500–1).

B” But be silent (502).

The dialogue contains an instance of the *‘rejected suggestion’* device (Odysseus rejects Euryclea’s suggestion that she will inform him about the maids), which serves to remind the narratees of the issue of the punishment of the disloyal maids; cf. 16.304–20n.
483–4 Odysseus confirms Euryclea’s recognition, using his own stock revelation formula; cf. 16.205–6n.

492–4 The narratees know that Euryclea is indeed able to keep a secret from 2.373–7 and 4.745–9, where she kept her oath to Telemachus not to tell Penelope about his voyage.

508–69 Although she had cut short the conversation in 317–19, Penelope now reopens it, in order to ask ‘the stranger’ ‘one more little thing’, which in fact will turn out to be a major thing, viz. to explain a dream of hers (535). Gradually and associatively she leads up to her request: ‘it is almost time to sleep, sleep which takes hold even of a worried person, but not of me, who keeps on pondering whether or not to remarry. Now that my son is adult he is pressing me to remarry, but please explain this dream to me (which seems to suggest that I should hold out a little longer)’. When ‘the stranger’ has interpreted the dream for her, she rejects his interpretation and calls the dream false. The same pattern is found in Iliad 24.193–227, where Priam asks Hecuba for advice (whether he should go to the Greek camp), but when she gives it (he should not go), rejects it. In Priam’s case it underlines his determination and courage, in Penelope’s case her pessimism concerning Odysseus.

515–34 For the motif of ‘sleeplessness’, cf. 20.1–55n. As often, it takes the specific form of the ‘lonely vigil’ motif: ‘but when the night comes and sleep takes all, I lie on my bed and anxieties torment my heart’ (515–17).

518–29 The function of Penelope’s simile † is to illustrate her continuous weeping (ὁδυρμένη/ολοφυρμένη) and the oscillations of her mind (θαμάς τρώπωσα=δίχα θυμός ὁρώρεται ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα). For similes in speeches, cf. 4.333–40n.; for (weeping) ‘bird’ similes, cf. 16.216–19n.; for ‘parents and children’ similes, cf. 2.47n. It is unusual for a simile to deal with named individuals, but Penelope identifies herself with the daughters of Pandareus, to whom she will refer again in 20.66–82.

524–34 Again (cf. 130–61) Penelope discusses the issue of *her remarriage, again referring to pressure from Telemachus to remarry (rather than to Odysseus’ instructions, which she ‘quoted’ in 18.259–70). Like Athena in 15.10–42n., she does not eschew exaggeration when describing the behaviour of her natural ‘opponent’ on the issue: the Odyssey contains no hint of Telemachus ‘praying’ (533) that his mother will leave the palace (on the contrary; cf. 2.130–7).
535–69 The scene in which Penelope discusses her dream with ‘the stranger’ is a complex instance of an *‘omen’ scene:19

Penelope Please explain the following dream for me (535).
(i) portent: the dream (536–50), which itself contains
  (i) a portent: I have twenty geese, who eat corn and whom I like watching. An eagle coming from the mountains killed them (536–40).
(ii) reaction: I was grieved about this (541–3).
(iii) exegesis: The eagle returned and speaking with a human voice said: ‘Have courage, this is no dream but reality. The geese stand for the Suitors, while I, your husband, was the eagle and will kill all the Suitors (544–50).
(iii) reaction: When I woke up, I saw my geese alive (551–3).

Odysseus (iii) exegesis: There is no other way to explain the dream than in the way Odysseus did. All the Suitors will die (555–8).

Penelope (iv) rejection of exegesis: There are true and deceptive dreams. I think this is a false one (560–9).

This omen is the last in a series of four ‘bird’ omens in the Odyssey which function as *prolepses of Odysseus’ return and the death of the Suitors; cf. 2.143–207n. Although the omen is intended primarily for Penelope, her recounting it to ‘the beggar’/Odysseus means that it becomes an omen for him too; whereas she rejects the omen, he accepts it.

Penelope’s remark in 581 that she will always remember the house of her (first) marriage ‘as if in a dream’ will form a fitting epilogue to the ‘dream’ scene: her ‘deceptive’ dream will come true, while the nostalgic dreaming of her former house will never take place.

536–50 Penelope’s dream20 is of the ‘action’ form (cf. 4.795–841n.); it contains a series of events, in which she herself participates. She does not indicate when she dreamt the dream, but that is less important than the fact that she has decided to tell it to ‘the stranger’ now; for Odysseus it now becomes an auspicious omen.

Penelope’s grief at the death of her geese is the logical result of her affection for them, can be compared to the grief of the men and women in another ‘bird’ omen (15.162–3), and should therefore not be taken to imply affection for the Suitors, who, moreover, at this stage are not yet identified with the geese; Penelope is recounting her dream exactly as she experienced it, not from an ex eventu position.

555–8 The narratees may savour the ambiguity † of Odysseus confirming the interpretation of ‘Odysseus himself’? 21 A similar emphatic use of his own name occurs in 585.

570–81 Penelope’s announcement that the following day she will organize a bow-contest in order to decide who is going to be her new husband is a powerful instance of *emanipation of speech: the idea of a contest has nowhere been prepared for beforehand. In itself her decision to surrender and remarry, which this contest implies, is the outcome of a process which the narratees have been able to follow for some time; cf. 18.250–83 and 19.130–61nn. The contest is not another trick to gain time, like the web: in 157–8 Penelope told ‘the stranger’ that she can think of no more tricks, and nowhere is there any indication that it would be impossible for anyone apart from Odysseus to string the bow (cf. 21.11–41n.). A sincere rather than a devious Penelope creates tension (Odysseus comes back in the nick of time) and dramatic irony † (when her surrender will in fact provide Odysseus with a weapon for his revenge22).

582–7 As in 18.281–3, Odysseus reacts positively to Penelope’s announcement to remarry. Here the reason is spelled out by Odysseus himself: (it will never happen, because) ‘Odysseus will come home before any of the Suitors strings the bow.’ The narratees are reassured that the bow-contest will not really lead to Penelope’s remarriage, but its spectacular dénouement (‘the beggar’/Odysseus winning the contest and using the bow to kill a great number of his opponents) is not yet revealed; cf. 13.372–439n.

Referring emphatically to Odysseus by his stock epithet πολύμητις Odysseus almost forgets his role as beggar; cf. 13.429–38n.

589–90 As τέρπειν, ‘give pleasure’, indicates, Penelope is complimenting ‘the beggar’s’ skill as a storyteller (cf. 8.83–92n. and cf. Eumaeus in 17.514–21). What is described here as a mere possibility (‘to listen to his

---

stories all night, without sleeping’) will become reality in 23.308–9. For storytelling and sleep, cf. 11.373–6n.

594–604 Penelope’s emphatic announcements about where she will sleep and where ‘the beggar’ will sleep (i) draws attention to the fact that the couple have still not been reunited, and (ii) prepares for their separate dreaming at the opening of the next book (cf. 20.1–121n.). The execution of her suggestions is narrated in parallel order †: first Penelope retires (600–4), then ‘the beggar’ (20.1–4); this is the last element of a split ‘retiring for the night’ scene (cf. 18.428n.) and the last phase of the protracted process of offering ‘the beggar’ a bed (cf. Introduction to 17).
BOOK TWENTY

This book contains the night of the long thirty-ninth day (1–90) and the first part of the equally long (1,581 lines) fortieth day, which will not end until 23.343; cf. Appendix A.

The night brings the preoccupations of Odysseus and Penelope (1–121), and the early day replays of earlier scenes: Odysseus meeting good and bad servants (162–239), the Suitors planning Telemachus’ death (240–7), and the Suitors abusing ‘the beggar’ (284–394). The functions of these scenes are: (i) to increase the tension by deferring the bow-contest which was announced in 19.570–81 (an instance of retardation †), while at the same time repeatedly anticipating the death of the Suitors (cf. 13.372–439n.), most notably in the form of the eerie omen seen only by Theoclymenus; and (ii) to make clear one more time the ethical and emotional position of the parties involved (the longing of Odysseus and Penelope for each other, and the gods’ support for Odysseus versus the wickedness of the Suitors).

Infected by the mounting tension of his story, the narrator steps forward more often than is his wont (cf. 1.1–10n.), showing his own feelings through the use of character-language; cf. 287–90, 291, 300–2, and 392–4nn.¹

1–121 This scene shows us husband and wife during the last night of their twenty-year separation, the narrator repeatedly switching between the two (‘interlace’ technique †):

19.603–4 Athena sheds sleep over Penelope.
20.1–57 Odysseus lies awake and converses with Athena, who finally sheds sleep over him.

¹ Griffin (1986: 47).
Penelope wakes up and prays for death to Artemis, relating a dream about Odysseus; no reaction is recorded.

Odysseus has a fantasy about Penelope. He prays to Zeus for support; his prayer is fulfilled.

The effects of the ‘interlace’ technique are: (i) to stress both the distance between the two, who have still not been reunited, and their mental closeness, since each dreams/fantasizes about the other, and (ii) to make clear their different outlook on the future (Penelope pessimistically foreseeing a remarriage; Odysseus apprehensively pondering his revenge), which is reinforced by the divine support which is openly given to Odysseus, but not to Penelope.

The dream/fantasy which Penelope and Odysseus have of each other, each imagining the other already to be lying/standing near to her/him, turn this scene into another chain in their ‘delayed recognition’; cf. Introduction to 19. Whereas Penelope already anticipates their lying in bed together (for which, cf. 23.295–346), Odysseus knows he must first be recognized by his wife (cf. 23.1–257).

1–57 Odysseus’ insomnia is the most elaborate instance of the ‘sleeplessness’ motif in the Odyssey; cf. 1.443–4; 15.4–8; 19.515–34nn.; II. 1.601–2.75; 9.712–10.33; and 24.1–18.2 Most of these passages are instances of the ‘lonely vigil’ motif: everyone is sound asleep, except for one person.3 Here Odysseus’ insomnia contrasts with the sleep of the Suitors (18.428), Telemachus (19.50), and Penelope (19.603–4), while his anxiety contrasts with the maidservants’ laughter and good cheer (8). For Odysseus tossing and turning, cf. Achilles in II. 24.5–11.

This is the most extended and complex ‘deliberation’ scene in Homer.4

Odysseus lies awake, devising evils against the Suitors. The maids who are wont to sleep with the Suitors go to their lovers. This makes Odysseus angry, who considers (5–9) (*indirect deliberation) whether to kill them (emotional alternative) or to let them go one last time (rational alternative) (10–13a).

His heart ‘barks’, (simile) like a bitch defending her pups (13b–16).

In a *monologue, which – uniquely – is neither deliberative nor reflective, but exhortative, he rebukes himself (for his impatience of 11), urging himself to

---

endure a little longer and using as a paradigm one of his own adventures, viz. the successful escape from the cave of the Cyclops (17–22). He endures, but twists and turns, (*simile*) like a sausage which is quickly turned round on a fire, (**indirect deliberation**) considering how to take revenge on the Suitors (23–9).

Athena heartens him and puts him to sleep (30–57).

Odysseus’ temporary despondency is one of the means by which the narrator manages to keep his narratees on tenterhooks, even though they know that the story will end well; cf. 1.16–18n. There is also the sustained *suspense concerning the form which *Odysseus’ revenge will take, which has still not been revealed. At the same time, the sustained insight into our hero’s mind once again shows the narratees his celebrated self-control and endurance (cf. the repetition of the root τλα-: τέτλαθη, ἔτλησ, ἔτόλμας, τετληνίῳ).

1–4 For Odysseus’ retiring to bed, cf. 19.594–604n. Odysseus persists in his role of stranger, by sleeping in the entrance hall (cf., e.g., Telemachus in Sparta: 4.302), and his role of beggar, by making the bed himself (just as in 95–7, he will unmake it again).

6–8 For maidservants sleeping with Suitors, cf. 18.325. How strongly Odysseus feels about this, will also become clear in 22.35–41, where in his ‘indictment’ against the Suitors he mentions their sleeping with the maids first. For the maids’ laughter, which, like that of the Suitors, will soon turn to tears, cf. 18.35n.

7 The narrator through the emphatic πάρος περ, ‘before’, underlines that the maids’ sleeping with the Suitors has been going on for some time; the expression not only seems to imply criticism (cf. 17.169n.) but also contains ‘a grim hint that this intercourse will not continue much longer’.

9–22 Odysseus’ feelings are first presented as embedded focalization, i.e., *unspoken thoughts* (9–13), and his barking takes place ‘inside’, i.e., in silence (13, 16). In 17, however, the maids have apparently removed themselves sufficiently for him to open his mouth and address himself (18–21).

Homeric *monologues are thought of as a dialogue between the speaker and his heart (cf. ‘deeply troubled he spoke to his own great-hearted heart’: 5.298, etc.; ‘but why has my heart suggested such a thing to me?’: *II.* 11.407, etc.). Here this idea is – uniquely – intensified in that Odysseus actually addresses his heart, using second-person verb forms.

---

5 Denniston (1959: 482).
11–13 Odysseus’ embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘he pondered’) triggers character-language †: ὅστοτα καὶ πῶματα, ‘for the very last time’ (twice in direct speech, once in simple narrator-text, a pathetic ‘if not’-situation: Il. 22.203) and *ὑπερφιόλοισ, ‘overbearing’.

13–16 The primary function of the simile †, which is triggered by a metaphor (cf. 19.204–9n.), is to illustrate the ‘barking’ of Odysseus’ heart (ὑλάκτει: 16=ὑλάει: 15). Its secondary function is to suggest his eagerness to fight the ‘strange man’ (Suitors). The vehicle chosen, a mother dog, (i) illustrates Odysseus’ urge to protect what is dear to him (cf. Il. 17.4–6, where Menelaus defending the body of Patroclus is compared to a mother cow defending her heifer); in general, Odysseus is often cast in the role of parent in comparisons (cf. 2.47n.); (ii) recalls the scene on Odysseus’ brooch, a dog strangling a fawn (19.228–31), where the dog presumably stands for Odysseus.

16 Odysseus’ embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘feeling offended at’) triggers character-language †: *κακός, ‘bad’.

18–21 A reference to the ‘Cyclops’ adventure; cf. 9.106–556n. This is one of the places where the Apologue is authenticated; cf. Introduction to 9. Odysseus’ use of μὴτις is an allusion to his ὁτί τρίκ; cf. 9.399–414n.

24–30 The primary function of the simile † is to illustrate the tossing of sleepless Odysseus (ἐνθα καὶ ἐνθα: 24 and 26). The secondary function is to suggest his eagerness for revenge; he ‘longs for’ his plans to ‘be cooked very quickly’. There is a touch of humour in the vehicle of the sausage, in view of Odysseus’ frequent use of the *‘accursed belly’ motif.

29–30 Odysseus’ embedded focalization (shifter: ‘pondering’) triggers character-language †: ἀπαθὴς, ‘shameless’ (seven times in speech, twice in embedded focalization, here and 386, and thrice in simple narrator-text, Il. 4.521; 5.593; 13.139). In the Odyssey it is used six out of seven times of the Suitors.

Once more, Odysseus is troubled by the *‘one against many’ motif.

30–57 Odysseus’ fretting is brought to an end by a divine intervention; cf. Il. 1.193–222; 10.507–12; 16.715–26. Because of the night-time hour, the meeting between god and mortal is structured along the lines of the *‘dream’ type-scene: (i) Odysseus is not sleeping (5–30a); (ii)–(iv) Athena

6 Fränkel (1921: 58).
comes to him in the shape of a woman (30b–31); (v) stands near his head (32); (vi) converses with him (33–53); and (vii), having shed sleep on him, leaves again (54–5); (viii) Odysseus reacts by falling asleep (56–7a; cf. 52). Athena appears openly to Odysseus: the shape of a woman which she assumes is hardly a disguise (cf. 13.221–440n.) and Odysseus immediately recognizes her (cf. 37 and 42).

Athena’s opening speech (33–5) is a variant of the typical ‘dream’ speech (cf. 6.25–40n.): (rebut) ‘why are you awake?’ (instead of ‘why are you asleep?’), (situation) ‘when everything is right’ (instead of ‘when the situation demands action’)? What is lacking is the advice, with which these speeches usually end. In his answer Odysseus reveals his anxiety at having to take revenge on many Suitors alone, which the narratees already knew about from his embedded focalization (38–40≈28–30; the *‘one against many’ motif) and the consequences of his revenge, which is a new issue (41–3). In her second speech (44–53) Athena does not go into these points, but instead comforts him in strong but general terms (the *‘(not) even + hyperbole’ motif ‘the two of us could steal cattle even against fifty battalions of men’ being her combative version of the *‘one against many’ motif, and the *significant use of the dual νοῦ in 50 suggesting the strong bonds between goddess and mortal protégé). The fact that again she does not come up with a plan of action leaves the narratees in the dark about the exact form of the revenge; cf. 13.372–439n.

The scene is a minor replay of the meeting between goddess and hero in 13.221–440, in which the revenge on the Suitors was likewise discussed and Odysseus encouraged; cf. the verbal echoes ὡπως δὴ μηνστήσοιν ἀναιδέσι χείρας ἐφήσω . . . τά σε φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα (39–43)≈φράζει ὡπως μηνστήσοιν ἀναιδέσι χείρας ἐφήσεις (13.376), σχέτλε (45, 13.293), διαμπερές ἢ σε φυλάσσω | ἐν πάντεσσι πόνοις (47–8)≈Ἡ τέ τοι αἰεὶ | ἐν πάντεσσι πόνοισι . . . φυλάσσω (13.300–1), and the hyperbole in 49–51, which resembles that in 13.389–91.

30–1 Athena’s entrance upon the scene is abrupt; cf. 18.1–8n.

34–5 Athena reminds Odysseus that he has reached the goals (home, wife, son) for which he has been struggling all these years; cf. 1.13n. She reinforces her words by gestures (ὅδε, ἢδε).
41–3 For the issue of the reaction of the families of the Suitors to the killing, cf. 24.412–548n.
47–8 For Athena’s – not entirely correct – claim that she has always helped Odysseus, cf. 13.316–43.
55 For Athena’s return to Olympus after her intervention, cf. 6.41–7n.
56–8 The change of scene †, from Odysseus in the porch to Penelope inside the palace, is accomplished through (a variant of) correspondence of action: as Odysseus falls asleep, Penelope wakes up. The hypotactic form, which is rare for a change of scene, underlines the relationship between the actions of husband and wife; cf. 1–121n.
58–90 Upon awaking, Penelope immediately begins to cry, just as she usually cries herself to sleep (cf. most recently 19.603–4). When she has finished, she addresses Artemis.

The speech starts off as a *prayer* type-scene: (i) speech-introduction with verb of praying (61); (ii) invocation (62); (iv) request, which here takes the form of a death wish (61–5); instead of (iii) a claim to favour on the basis of services in the past/future, we find a mythological precedent (66–78). From 79 onwards, however, this type-scene is given up: Artemis is no longer addressed, but referred to in the third person (80) and (v) the speech-capping and deity’s response are lacking. Now talking to herself, Penelope reiterates her death wish (79–82) and then – of course for the benefit of the narratees – describes the dream she had that night (83–90).

61–82 This is an expanded version of Penelope’s death wish in 18.200–5 (and cf. Helen in II. 6.345–8), the expansion underlining that now – or so she is convinced – the dreaded moment of remarriage (cf. 82) has arrived. The structure of the passage is a ring-composition †:

A Artemis, if only you would slay me now (61–3a)
B or later a storm would carry me away (63b–65),
C (mythological exemplum, told in the form of an epic regression †)
   c just as a storm carried away the daughters of Pandareus (66).
   a The gods killed their parents, but the girls were raised by goddesses (67–72).
   b When Aphrodite set out to arrange their marriage (73–6),
   c’ the Harpies snatched them away and gave them as servants to the Erinyes (77–8).
B’ In like way may the gods make me disappear (79)
A’ or may Artemis slay me, so that I will meet Odysseus in the Underworld and never have to share the company of a lesser man (80–2).

66–82 Once again (cf. 19.518–29), Penelope compares herself to the daughters of Pandareus: in Book 19 one of them inadvertently kills her own son; here, their parents are killed and they themselves are turned into servants instead of being married. The correspondences between Penelope and the daughters are as follows:

**daughters of Pandareus**

- Lose their parents.
- Are raised by the gods and are endowed with beauty and accomplishments.
- Just prior to their marriage, they are snatched away and end up as servants of the ‘terrible’ (στυγερῆ/-ήν) Erinyes.

**Penelope**

- (Thinks she has) lost her husband.
- Is endowed with beauty and accomplishments.
- Just prior to her remarriage, she wishes to be snatched away and end up as servants of the ‘terrible’ (στυγερῆ/-ήν) Erinyes. Underworld.

An important difference between Penelope and the daughters of Pandareus is, however, that the former embraces her arrival in the Underworld, because it will reunite her with Odysseus, making it unnecessary for her to marry a lesser man.

83–90 Penelope had complained about her troubled nights in 19.510–34; there it was anxious thoughts which bothered her, here bad dreams, which are sent—characteristically—by a *δαιμόνιον.

Penelope’s *dream is of the ‘action’ type: Odysseus is lying next to her in bed and she is happy. She had the dream at the same time Odysseus was sleeplessly tossing and turning. It is clearly triggered by the conversation of the previous evening, in which her memory of Odysseus ‘such as he was at the time he went with the army’ (89) was revived (19.217–57). The very fact that Penelope speaks of ‘bad dreams’ (87) reveals that, upon awaking, she has abandoned her own joyful conclusion within the dream, that it was ‘not
a dream but reality’. The situation recalls Penelope’s earlier dream in 19.535–69, in which it was also said within the dream that the good news was ‘not a dream but reality’ (19.547), and which likewise was qualified by her upon awaking as a bad dream (19.568: σινόν οὐκείρον). At the same time, the second dream shows a progression, in that in this one she is lying in bed with Odysseus.

92–4 The change of scene †, from Penelope inside the palace to Odysseus outside, is accomplished through the ‘line of perception’ device; Odysseus hears Penelope weeping. The exact status of Odysseus’ ensuing mental vision of Penelope is unclear: is he awake or is he dreaming, blending the sound of her weeping into his dream? Anyway, his vision reveals his desire to allow himself finally to be recognized by his wife; all through their night-time encounter he had to do his utmost not to be recognized by her.

95–7 For ‘the beggar’/Odysseus himself stripping his bedding, cf. 1–4n.

97–102 A regular instance of the *‘prayer’ type-scene: (i) verb of praying and gesture (97b); (ii) invocation (98a); (iii) claim to favour on the basis of past service (98b–99; the gods have brought him back home); (iv) request (100–1; for ominous words inside and an omen outside); and (v) speech-capping and deity’s response (102).

103–21 Odysseus’ double request is fulfilled in reverse order †: first the omen outside (103–4), then the ominous words inside (105–21). This order has a practical purpose, in that the servant’s ominous words are in fact a reaction to the omen (113–14a, refers to 103–4a). The scene is structured along the lines of an *‘omen’ scene: (i) portents, both cued by the previous prayer (103–4a, 112–19); (ii) reaction (104b, 120b–121a); (iii) exegesis (121b). Both omens are *prolepses of the Suitors’ death. Zeus will again thunder in support in 21.413–15.

105–21 Odysseus had asked for ominous words from ‘one of the people awakening inside the house’. They come from one of the women in charge of grinding the corn, who, because she is the weakest, is the only one still busy finishing her work (a pathetic instance of the *‘all the others . . . but X (alone) . . .’ motif). The explicit narratorial characterization † of the anonymous servant (105–10) is, in the Homeric manner, carefully tailored to her present function: being ‘the weakest’, she suffers most under the strain which the continuous presence of the feasting Suitors places on the servants (cf. 118–19) and therefore prays that this day will bring their last dinner.

Her prayer is an instance of unintentionally portentous speech (cf.
The periphrastic denomination † ‘her master’ (111) is triggered by the woman; cf. ἄνακτα in 17.201.

111–21 The servant’s words have the format of a *’prayer’ type-scene: (i) neutral speech-introduction (111); (ii) invocation (112); instead of (iii) a claim of the god’s favour on account of past or future services she gives a description and interpretation of Zeus’s thunder (113–14; ‘you show this as a sign to someone’); (iv) request (115–19; ‘may the Suitors dine today for the last time’); (v) neutral speech-capping (120a) and instead of the reaction of the deity, we find Odysseus’ reaction (120b–121).

The servant’s loathing of the Suitors – not for ethical reasons, but on strictly pragmatic grounds – adds one more perspective to the already broad spectrum of their negative portrayal.

121 The strongly pejorative term ‘offenders’ (ἄλειτας) should be ascribed to Odysseus’ embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘he thought’); cf. Il. 3.28 (these are the only two instances of this word in Homer).

122–62 Here we see the start of a protracted instance of the *‘festive meal’ type-scene: (i) preparations (tending of the fire: 122–3; cleaning of palace and utensils, fetching of wood and water, split up into order and execution: 147–62). These are the most detailed preparations in the Odyssey; the amplification is actorially motivated † by the circumstance that this is a festive day for Apollo (cf. 156 and 163n.) and narratorially motivated † by the narrator’s desire to increase tension through retardation †, here in the form of a slow down of the rhythm: this is to be the Suitors’ last supper, and it will end with their death. The type-scene will be continued in 250–83.

124–46 Telemachus dresses and goes to the assembly place. What was presented as a continuous sequence in 2.1–11, is here split up by a conversation with Euryclea:

124 cf. 2.2 getting up
125–7 = 2.3–4 + 15.551 *’dressing’ type-scene
128–44 conversation with Euryclea
145a cf. 2.10b holding spear
145b = 2.11b dogs
146a = 2.10a setting off

The function of Telemachus’ mission is not immediately clear: we do not hear why he goes to the assembly place or what he does there; in 257 he will
simply have returned to the palace, his going back being passed over (an ellipsis †). A possible actorial motivation † is that he picks up Theoclymenus, who in 350 will appear to be in the palace; cf. 17.61–84 (20.144–5 ≈ 17.61–2). Possible narratorial motivations † are to allow Odysseus private interviews with three of his servants (162–239), and the Suitors a last secret meeting in which they plan Telemachus’ death (241–7).

128–44 Before going to bed, Telemachus had heard from his father that he intended to use the night-time conversation with Penelope to test her and the maids (45). Getting up he wants to hear how matters have developed and asks Euryclea how Penelope treated ‘the stranger’. Not being on the best of terms with his mother (cf. 1.345–59n.), he considers the possibility that she sent him away dishonourably. He asks two questions (bedding, eating: 129–30), which Euryclea answers in reverse order † (eating: 136–7, bedding: 138–43). Her report is a mirror-story †, which takes the form of an internal repeating analepsis †; the comparison with the actual events reveals her loyalty to Penelope and the truth of her claim to Odysseus that she would keep quiet about his presence (cf. 19.493–4):

**Euryclea’s report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The stranger drank, but did not eat.</th>
<th>Actual events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(she invents this to counter Telemachus’ insinuation about Penelope’s lack of hospitality)</td>
<td>19.317a, 343–507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(she leaves out the footwashing and recognition of Odysseus)</td>
<td>19.317b–319 (and 599)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penelope ordered her maids to prepare a bed, but the beggar refused.</td>
<td>19.337–42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He laid down on hides and we covered him with a cloak.</td>
<td>20.1–3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

147–59 For Euryclea’s detailed preparations of a festive meal, cf. 122–62n. Her orders (A: ‘Sweep the palace, cover the stools with tapestry, wash the tables and utensils, B: fetch water at the well’) are executed in reverse order †: (B’) twenty maids went to the well, (A’) others were busy in the palace.
For the relevance of the revenge taking place on a festive day for Apollo, cf. 276–8n.

Odysseus has meetings with three of his servants (a good one, a bad one, a good one), which are described in three similar scenes; an instance of a triadic structure †: a servant arrives, driving cattle to the palace, tethers his animals, addresses Odysseus, who reacts/does not react. The connection between the three scenes is emphasized by means of refrain-composition †: ἔλθε (162) . . . ἔλθε (173) . . . τρίτος ἔλθε (185). The structural similarity highlights the contrast between the good servants and the bad one. The three servants will be united again in 253–5, where they wait at table, and in 22.178–200, where Eumaeus and Philoetius capture and bind up Melanthius.

The first meeting. Eumaeus brings pigs to the palace, as he was ordered to do by Telemachus in 17.600. The brief exchange with Odysseus serves to (i) stress, once again, *Eumaeus’ kind nature (inquiring after ‘the stranger’s’ well-being) and the Suitors’ depravity (Odysseus takes the opportunity to condemn their behaviour in strong terms: *λόβην, ‘outrage’, *ὑβρίζωντες, ‘acting wantonly’, *ἀτάσθαλα, ‘reckless deeds’, and lack of σίδονς, ‘respect’); and (ii) increase the tension (‘the stranger’ wishes for the Suitors to be divinely punished; this is another *prolepsis of the Suitors’ death, which gains weight from the fact that, as Odysseus and the narratees know, Zeus indeed has just pledged his support: 97–121).

The swineherd brings three pigs, instead of the customary one (cf. 14.19, 27). These will be followed by goats (173–5) and a cow and goats (185–8); cf. their sacrifice in 250–1. The great number is occasioned by the fact that this is a festive day (cf. 122–62n.); it will be explicitly noted by the narrator in 391.

The second meeting (cf. 162–239n.). Odysseus is insulted by Melanthius for a second time, in a scene which structurally recalls the first (cf. 17.204–60n.); the speaker alludes to this earlier occasion through ἡτικαὶ νῦν, ‘still’. His abuse combines (i) an element already encountered in a speech by his sister Melantho, ‘are you still here?’ (178≈19.66, 179≈19.68a) and (ii) a threat of physical violence, which is common in this context (cf. 17.217–32n.). As during the earlier confrontation, Odysseus does not allow himself to be provoked, but his *unspoken thoughts in 184 speak volumes. Odysseus’ refusal to answer Melanthius contrasts with his
open communication with the two good servants and effectively disarms
the cowherd’s abuse, which is left hanging in the air.

181 For the relevance of the metaphor ‘to have a taste of my fists’, cf.
20.390–4n.

185–240 The third and longest meeting brings on stage a new character,
Philoetius. He is not given an explicit characterization † by the narrator,
but by his words characterizes himself as a ‘goodie’. He speaks thrice, each
speech displaying a different aspect of his nature: his first speech displays
spontaneous pity and reverence for ‘the stranger’, which contrasts with
Melanthius’ (17.217–32) and Antinous’ (17.375–9) spontaneous abuse, and
resembles Eumaeus’ spontaneous pity (14.47); his second speech displays
loyalty to (absent) Odysseus and Telemachus; his third speech displays
eagerness to assist them in a fight against the Suitors. The scene raises for
the second time (cf. 16.256–69) the question of helpers for the avengers
Odysseus and Telemachus. There is still no hint of the surprising dénou-
ment of *Odysseus’ revenge, but the idea of a pitched battle is maintained.
In 21.188–244 Odysseus will reveal himself to Philoetius and Eumaeus,
who immediately pledge their assistance (237–9 = 21.202–4). Philoetius
will take an active part in the battle with the Suitors: cf. 22.178–200, 267–8,
and 285–92.

Philoetius is a character doublet † of *Eumaeus, showing the same pity
for ‘the beggar’, abhorrence of the Suitors, and loyalty to the absent
Odysseus; the two often act together and are significantly referred to by
means of *duals (cf. 21.188–244n.). At the same time there is a difference in
temperament between the two, in that Eumaeus is passive and complacent
(he doggedly stays at his post and awaits what the gods will bring:
14.444–5), Philoetius active and rebellious (he accuses the gods: 201–3, con-
siders fleeing from the palace and the Suitors: 217–25, and reacts enthusiasti-
cally rather than sceptically to ‘the stranger’s’ announcement of Odysseus’
revenge: 236–7).

Philoetius’ dealings with ‘the beggar’/Odysseus can be analysed in terms
of the *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern: there is (i) the dramatic irony †
of the ‘host’ speaking spontaneously about the unrecognized guest in his
presence (204–25); (ii) the test; (iv) Odysseus’ revelation; (vi) the token of
recognition, and (vii) the emotional reunion (21.188–244n.).

The scene starts along well-known lines (cf. 162–239n.): Philoetius arrives and tethers his animals. But, instead of addressing ‘the beggar’, he first asks Eumaeus – *standing near him and, apparently, not wishing his question to be heard – who this stranger is who looks like a king and has apparently been struck with misfortune by the gods (191–6; cf. Telemachus in 16.57–9). His intuition is right both for ‘the stranger’ (cf. 17.419–44) and for Odysseus (the narratees may note the particular aptness of *δύσμορος, ‘unfortunate’, and *πολυπλάγκτους, ‘much tossed about’). Without waiting for an answer from Eumaeus, Philoetius then turns to Odysseus himself; the *two consecutive speeches by one speaker* device allows the narrator to describe Philoetius’ friendly gesture of greeting Odysseus with his right hand (197).

His second speech repeats sentiments uttered earlier by Eumaeus and Euryclea: ‘Welcome. I hope you will be more lucky later, but now you are in the grip of misfortune. Zeus, you bring misfortune to men (cf. Euryclea in 19.363–9. Philoetius uses generalizing plurals, which ease the transition to the next section, in which he will turn from ‘the stranger’ to Odysseus). Seeing you, I am forcefully reminded of Odysseus, who presumably is also wandering around wearing rags, if he is still alive (cf. Euryclea in 19.370–1 and note the typical *κεῖνον). If he has already died, I mourn him, who made me his cowherd when I was still very young (cf. Eumaeus, who likewise has been attached to Odysseus’ oikos from his very youth: 15.363–70). Since then his flocks have increased enormously (cf. Eumaeus in 14.96–104). But now they are being eaten by the Suitors, who do not bother about Telemachus. They do not fear the gods (cf. Eumaeus in 14.82) and even consider dividing up Odysseus’ goods (Philoetius was not present when the idea of a division was uttered by Antinous in 16.384–5, but is now made aware of it through the device of transference †). I have been considering fleeing the country with the flocks, but concern for Telemachus and hope that Odysseus might return have withheld me.’

In his reaction (227–34) ‘the beggar’ returns Philoetius’ compliment about his royal appearance (cf. 194) with a counter compliment (227–8: ‘you look like a sensible man’), and his loyalty (cf. 224–5) with an oath about Odysseus’ return (229–34; *prolepses of Odysseus’ return and the death of the Suitors). He made the same oath *vis-à-vis* Eumaeus (14.158–64) and

---

9 Besslich (1966: 75–6).
Penelope (19.303–7), but this time he reinforces his words by inserting ‘while you are still here’ for ‘this lukabas’ and turning his addressee Philoetius into a – tertiary – focalizer (‘you will see with your own eyes how . . .’; cf. 23.47–8n.). The authority and intensity with which Odysseus speaks in 233–4 almost betrays his true identity; cf. 13.429–38n. In contrast to Eumaeus (14.166–7) and Penelope (19.309–16), Philoetius does not react with pessimism.

204 His sweating and crying, here referred to by Philoetius, had not been mentioned by the narrator prior to his speech; an instance of *emancipation of speech.

238–9 For a second, identical action being summarized (through ‘in like way’), cf. 3.64n.

240–7 This is the last in a series of private conferences of the Suitors; cf. 2.6–259n. The Suitors plan to kill Telemachus but are stopped by a negative ‘bird’ omen. The scene forms the continuation of the previous Suitors’ conference (16.342–406), in which Amphinomus had suggested that they consult the gods as to whether or not to kill Telemachus; they now have their – negative – answer. Its function is to show the ineffectiveness of their murderous plans, as compared to the increasingly precise and threatening plans of Odysseus. The narrator underlines their ineffectiveness (i) by not even bothering to quote their deliberations, confining himself to a mere summary (241–2: ‘they planned death for Telemachus’) and (ii) through the device of juxtaposition †, in that the narratees have only just heard Odysseus announce to Philoetius that he will see with his own eyes how Odysseus kills the Suitors: 233–4.

240–2 The change of scene †, from Odysseus to the Suitors, is accomplished without intermediaries or correspondence but is prepared for by an appositive summary †.

242–7 A *(bird) omen’ scene: (i) portent (242–3. Coming from the left, it is immediately stamped as unlucky; the narratees, aware of the continuous *bird’ imagery in the Odyssey, may specifically connect the eagle with Odysseus and the dove with the Suitors; (iii) correct interpretation by the moderate Suitor *Amphinomus (244–6); (iv) which is accepted by the other Suitors (247). The omen will again be referred to in 273.

250–83 The type-scene of the festive meal continues on from 122–62, becomes mixed with a *sacrifice’ type-scene, and is elaborated to mark the presence of Odysseus:
(ii) killing of victims (250–1)
(all details of the customary sacrifice ritual are left out; mere economy of the narrator or a hint that the Suitors are not pious in this respect either?)
(iv) roasting of entrails (252a; no mention of the thighs which are normally prepared for the gods)

(ii) serving of bread, meat (entrails) and wine (252–5)
(iii) consumption (of entrails) (256–75; Odysseus is served by Telemachus)

(v) preparation of meat for meal (279)
(vi) meal (280–3; Telemachus sees to it that Odysseus gets a portion)

252–5 Instead of anonymous servants, the triad of good and bad servants (cf. 162–239n.) performs the chore of serving; thus the narratees are reminded of their presence at the scene of the revenge (even though its exact form has not yet been revealed; cf. next note).

257–83 In 19.320–4 Penelope announced that the next day ‘the stranger’ would be bathed, sit in the mezgaron next to Telemachus and eat, and no longer be bothered by the Suitors. However, things develop differently: Telemachus does not give ‘the stranger’ a bath, and does not let him sit next to him, but makes him sit on an ‘unseemly’ chair (cf. 17.339–41n.), he does provide him with an equal share of the food, and warns the Suitors not to touch him (first in the form of indirect dialogue †: 263–5; then directly: 266–7). The scene shows us Telemachus both self-confidently acting as the master of the house and the host of ‘the stranger’ (contrast his behaviour in Book 1, where he does entertain his guest ‘Mentes’/Athena, but more or less secretly, and in 17.336–58, where he takes care of ‘the beggar’/Odysseus via Eumaeus) and ‘shrewdly’ (cf. 257) preparing for the revenge (taking care that Odysseus sits inside the mezgaron; even though the exact form of the revenge is not yet clear, on account of 19.1–50 it may be expected to take place in the mezgaron).

Telemachus’ self-confidence is noted by the Suitors (268–9 = 1.381–2)
and again (cf. 1.384–7) leads to a speech by Antinous (271–4). He exhorts his fellow suitors to give heed to Telemachus’ words, but adds a threat (‘if not for Zeus, we would have killed you’), which the narratees may relate to the scene in 241–7. His speech is an instance of indirect dialogue †: he clearly intends Telemachus to hear his threatening words, which the youth does, without, however, bothering to react (275b). Where the device of indirect dialogue in the first books of the Odyssey served mainly to underline that the Suitors do not take the youth seriously, it now gives expression to their impotence.

The scene leads up to the ensuing pelting scene (284–325): Telemachus giving ‘the beggar’ an equal share of the meat will trigger a reaction from one of the Suitors (cf. 293–5); his assurance that he will defend ‘the beggar’ against verbal and physical abuse (263–7) will be flaunted by Ctesippus’ taunting and pelting of Odysseus. The contrast, the Suitors doing exactly what they had been asked not to do, underscores their depravity.

258 Odysseus’ position near the *threshold is indicative of his role as ‘beggar’. Later he will fight the Suitors from this strategic position.

259 Just as Athena had announced that she would make Odysseus ‘unseemly’ (ἀεικέλιος) in the eyes of the Suitors, his son and wife (13.402–3), and had provided him with ‘ugly (κακὸν) rags’ (13.434) and an ‘unseemly (ἀεικέα) wallet’ (437 and cf. 17.357), Telemachus now gives him an ‘unseemly (ἀεικέλιον) chair and small table. *κακὸς and *ἀεικ- belong to the character-language †; when used to describe Odysseus’ *disguise, the words do not reflect the emotions of the deceivers (Athena, Odysseus, Telemachus), but the intended effect on the deceived (the Suitors, Penelope, etc.); cf. 13.400 (‘I will put rags around you, which any man seeing you wearing them will loathe’).

276–8 An abrupt change of scene †, from Odysseus’ palace to Apollo’s grove (and back again). The main function of this little scene is to make clear (after a fleeting remark in 156) that today is a festive day for Apollo. This circumstance will add weight to the revenge of Odysseus, who kills a great number of Suitors with his bow on a day consecrated to the archer god. The ‘Apollo’ motif was foreshadowed in 17.494; 18.235–42; 19.86; and – perhaps – the ‘bird’ omen of 15.525–8; it is continued in 21.257–68, 338; 22.7.

The scene also – implicitly – shows us the impiety of the Suitors, who do not join the other Ithacans in their religious observance. In 21.257–68 they will suddenly remember what day it is and use the feast as a pretext to stop the contest.
The scene of the Suitors abusing Telemachus’ guests displays the ‘interruption’ device †:10

Spurred on by Athena, Ctesippus taunts Odysseus.

(interruption) Agelaus and Telemachus discuss Penelope’s remarriage.

Spurred on by Athena, the Suitors laugh at the seer Theoclymenus and his prophecy of their death; next, they tease Telemachus about his two guests, ‘the beggar’ and the seer.

The third pelting scene (cf. 17.360–506n.):

Athena incites the Suitors to misbehaviour (= 18.346–8).

(aggresive act) Ctesippus taunts Odysseus

and throws an ox-hoof at him.

(composed reaction) Odysseus avoids it, smiling inwardly. It hits the wall.

(reaction by bystander) Telemachus criticizes Ctesippus.

(instead of a reaction by the aggressor, we have a pacifying reaction by another Suitor) Agelaus calls Telemachus’ criticism justified (322–5 = 18.414–17).

Ctesippus is introduced in a chunk of explicit narratorial characterization †, the narrator emphatically starting off with the *‘there was a man X . . .’* motif. As always, the introduction is tailored to the immediate context: Ctesippus is ‘lawless’ (he will mock the custom of offering a guest-gift) and in wooing Penelope he relies on his riches (rather than on personal virtues such as force; hence his throw at Odysseus will be without any conviction). As often when dealing with the Suitors, the narrator makes no attempt to hide his personal distaste and turns to using character-language †: ἀθεμιστικα, ‘lawless things’ (five times direct speech, once embedded focalization: 17.363) and τοι (only here and II. 10.316, again in the context of an introduction, outside direct speech11). Ctesippus will be killed in 22.285–92, on which occasion the incident with the ox-hoof is recalled.

Still in an emotional mood (cf. previous note), for once the narrator

himself calls the Suitors ‘overbearing’ (*ὑπερφιάλοισι); a narratorial intervention.

292–300 Ctesippus’ behaviour recalls that of the Cyclops in 9.369–70 (also called ‘lawless’: 9.189, 428): both offer a deed of violence by way of ironic guest-gift. His speech is aimed at hurting not only ‘the beggar’ but also Telemachus: whereas the latter treated ‘the beggar’ as an honoured guest, Ctesippus persists in seeing him as a servant (cf. 297–8: ‘the stranger’ might give his ‘guest-gift’ as a ‘gift of honour’ to a fellow servant).

300–2 Odysseus’ reaction is no longer repressed anger (17.463–5) or fear (18.394–6), but a sovereign ‘inward’ smile; a special variant of *‘unspoken thoughts’. Cf. Telemachus’ similarly superior smile in 16.476. The intensifying adverb τοσοῦ, ‘so much’, belongs to the character-language † (three times narrator text, eight times direct speech).

304–19 In the two earlier pelting scenes, Telemachus had reacted with silence (17.489–91) and a moderately angry speech (18.406–9); now he no longer restrains himself. His speech is in the form of a ring-composition †:

A  (threat) It is good you did not hit the stranger, for otherwise I would have killed you (304–8a).
B  (request) Let no one show any more unseemly deeds in the palace (308b–309a).
C  I notice everything, good and bad. Before I was only a child (309b–310 = 18.228–9).
C’  But even though I know things are not good in the palace, I cannot alone restrain many (311–13).
     (an instance of the *‘Telemachus coming of age’ motif)
B’  (request) Stop your mean behaviour (314).
A’  If you want to kill me, (reference to Antinous’ threat of 271–4)
     I prefer this to continuing to watch your shameful behaviour (315–19 ≈ 16.106–9).

320–37 The Suitor Agelaus here makes his entrance. In contrast to Ctesippus just before, he is not introduced by the narrator. His is a somewhat ambivalent character: his present speech marks him as a moderate man (he condones Telemachus’ angry outburst and offers a ‘soft word’
regarding the question of Penelope’s remarriage); he will, however, play a leading role in the battle against Odysseus (22.131–41, 241, 247–56) and abuse ‘Mentor’/Athena (212–23). He will be killed by Odysseus in 22.292–6.

326–44 The quiet and reasonable discussion about *Penelope’s remarriage briefly interrupts the atmosphere of heated emotions. Though it departs from the topic of Telemachus’ guests, it can be said to be triggered by Telemachus’ remark in 307–8 (‘... your father would have had to arrange your burial instead of your marriage’) and to answer Telemachus’ complaint in 316–19 that he has to watch the unpleasant sight of the Suitors carousing in his palace (cf. esp. 336–7: ‘urge your mother to remarry, so you can enjoy eating and drinking’).

The main interest of the scene lies in (i) the dramatic ironies † in the speech of Agelaus, who still thinks of ‘the beggar’ as a servant (324–5), reiterates that Odysseus will never come home (333), and advises Telemachus to urge his mother to remarry (334–5), whereas the narratees – but not the Suitors or Telemachus – know from 19.570–81 that she has already decided to do so; (ii) the acting by Telemachus, who, although he knows that Odysseus is back and therefore that a remarriage will never take place, pretends that he is urging his mother to remarry but does not want to force her.

345–86 This eerie scene features *Theoclymenus’ finest hour in the Odyssey. He first warns the Suitors about their impending death indirectly, in the form of his description of the ominous supernatural phenomena which they themselves do not see (351–7; see below). As usual (cf. 2.143–207n.), they reject the warning: they laugh at him (358; cf. 18.35n.), Eurymachus calls him mad (360), and exhorts his fellow Suitors to escort him to the daylight of the marketplace, i.e., suggests that he is blind (361–2). The narratees may note the grim dramatic irony † of the real fool calling the wise man a fool (cf. 9.273) and the real blind men calling the seeing man blind. Theoclymenus answers Eurymachus’ two points in inverted order †: ‘I have eyes, ears, and feet myself (i.e., he is not blind) and my mind is sound (i.e., he is not mad). With those I will myself go out’ (364–6). He adds a second, direct warning (367–70). When he has left, the Suitors switch their attention and tease ‘unfortunate-in-his-guests’ Telemachus (373–84a); he does not, however, let himself be provoked (384b–386).

The supernatural phenomena resemble those of 12.394–6, where the dead cattle of Helius low on the spit and their hides crawl. The description
is split up between the narrator (347–9) and Theoclymenus (351–7); the seer repeats information given by the narrator (the Suitors’ tears and wailing), varies it (walls streaming with blood instead of meat covered with blood), subtracts from it (he mentions no laughter), and adds to it (the Suitors are wrapped in darkness). Only the final element, the ghosts of the Suitors hurrying towards the Underworld, seems to flow forth from ecstatic prophecy. A striking feature of Theoclymenus’ description is his use of perfects (e.g., εἶλοντοκνί, δέδη). Since the semantic force of the perfect tense is to describe a situation achieved, the tense seems to be used here rhetorically, to underline the warning nature of his words: what he describes is the nearby and inevitable future; cf. ἡδηδη in 347, 348.12

The supernatural phenomena are by far the most graphic and haunting *prolepsis of the Suitors’ death: blood, tears, and ghosts are self-evident (cf. the showers of rain in II. 11.53–5 and 16.459–61); οἴμωγη can express the wailing of men dying on the battlefield (cf. II. 4.450 = 8.64); and the expression ‘night covered X’s eyes’ regularly describes death (contrast the flood of light in 19.33–43, which signifies Athena’s support for Odysseus and Telemachus and anticipates their victory).

360–2 Reacting to Theoclymenus’ speech, Eurymachus does not address the seer but talks about him to the other Suitors; an instance of – contemptuous – indirect dialogue †, which also makes clear that they do not take his warning seriously.

364–70 In his reaction, Theoclymenus counters Eurymachus’ claim that he is mad and the suggestion that he needs escorts to bring him outside (‘catch-word’ technique †: his παμμήκας picks up ἐκπέμψατε: 361, his ἥροςε picks up that in 361).

369–70 The narrator uses the authoritative figure of Theoclymenus to once again strongly criticize the Suitors (just prior to their punishment); cf. 1.224–9n.

371–2 As is his wont, the narrator records the execution of what is announced in words; in the present instance, Theoclymenus’ leaving the house acquires an ominous significance in view of his words in 367–70 (‘I will leave the house, because I see evil coming towards you’). His return to Piraeus (cf. 15.539–41n.) seems recorded here so as to make clear the contrast between this friendly host and the unfriendly Suitors, who treat

12 Kühner and Gerth (1904: 150).
Telemachus’ guests so badly. After this, nothing more is heard of Theoclymenus. He is one of the open ends of the *Odyssey*; cf. 13.363–71n.

373–84 Having so far heard individual Suitors speak, we now listen to them expressing themselves collectively in the form of an *actual tis*-speech. They pretend to pity Telemachus, who has to put up with a beggar, a mere burden to the household (cf. 17.219–28 and 375–9), and a mock prophet. It would be more profitable to sell the two guests as slaves.

Looking at one another is the gesture which usually accompanies actual *tis*-speeches; cf. 8.328; 10.37; 13.167; 18.72, 400; 21.396; *Il.* 2.271; 4.81; 22.372. It seems to underscore the collectivity of this type of speech; one looks at the other to see one’s own ideas confirmed.

381–3 For the threat to sell someone as a slave in a foreign country, cf. 17.249–50. In the particular case of Odysseus, it is a perversion of the escort of a guest; cf. Introduction to 17.

384–6 *Telemachus’ reaction is the same as in 275, but this time the narrator reveals to the narratees his feelings in the form of embedded focalization †: he waits for the moment that his father will finally (δῆ) start his revenge on the ‘shameless’ (*énaid°si) Suitors. The narratees are still led to expect an open fight as the form of *Odysseus’ revenge.

For the communication through gestures between father and son, cf. 16.476–7n.

387–91 An abrupt change of scene †, from the *megaron* to Penelope’s upper room. The narrator leads on to the ’Penelope’ scene of 21.1–358, but not before feasting his eyes one last time on the merry Suitors.

391 For the Suitors’ laughter, cf. 18.35n.

392–4 This is an unusually emphatic narratorial *prolepsis † of the Suitors’ death, containing the typical *proleptic μὲλλω. It takes its cue from the meal which the Suitors are enjoying at this moment, and the many other meals which they have had in the course of the narrative: soon they will be served an entirely different and most unpleasant ‘meal’. We are dealing with an instance of the *‘disturbed meal’ motif. The metaphorical use of ‘meal’ will be continued in 21.428–30 and cf. the metaphorical ‘to taste fists/arrows’ in 21.98n.

Once more, the narrator takes care to justify – this time, in *propria persona* – the Suitors’ upcoming punishment, by dismissing their behaviour as ‘wrongdoing’, lit. ‘unseemly deeds’ (*ἐεικέα), and stressing that they began (cf. the stress on the beginning of hostilities by Paris in *Il.* 3.100 and 22.116).
Book Twenty-One

Book 21 continues the long fortieth day of the *Odyssey* (cf. Introduction to 20) and contains the bow-contest from the moment it is initiated by Penelope until it is won by Odysseus. A central role is played by the object of the bow (cf. the deictic τόδε in 92, 153 and τάδε in 349): after being elaborately introduced by the narrator, it is first handled by several members of the Odysseus-party, viz. Penelope (who fetches it from a storeroom), Eumaeus (who hands it over to the Suitors), and Telemachus (who would have strung it, had his father not signalled him not to), then comes into the hands of the Suitors, Leodes and Eurymachus (who try unsuccessfully to string it), until finally, again via the hands of Eumaeus, it ends up with its rightful owner Odysseus. Almost the entire book consists of retardations †, which postpone the climactic moment when Odysseus is given the bow which the narratees now know (since line 4) will be his revenge weapon. The actual stringing of the bow and shooting of an arrow through the twelve axes takes up only a few lines. Throughout this series of retardations the tension of the narratees is kept ‘at full steam’ through repeated *prolepses of the Suitors’ death.

The contest episode is carefully structured:

- **67–139** Penelope’s announcement of the contest and Telemachus’ turn *(hors concours)*
- **140–87** Leodes’ turn
- **188–244** *(interruption)* Odysseus reunited with Eumaeus and Philoetius
- **245–73** Eurymachus’ turn
- **274–434** ‘the beggar’s’ turn *(hors concours)*
The unity is reinforced by structural and verbal similarities between the four attempts; cf. 118–39n.

The narrator’s excitement is evident in his repeated use of character-language: cf. 28, 96–100, and 98nn.

1–358 A highly expanded *‘Penelope leaves her room’ scene: (i) indication of why she leaves her room (1–4); she goes to a storeroom to fetch Odysseus’ bow (5–62); (ii) she goes to the Suitors in the megaron (63); (iii) takes a position near one of the central pillars, veiled and flanked by servants (64–6); (iv) speaks (67–79); is present as a silent character at the contest (80–310) until (iv) she speaks again, intervening on behalf of ‘the beggar’ (311–19, 331–42); (v) she is sent to her room by Telemachus (343–53); (vi) reacts with amazement (354–5 = 1.360–1) and (vii) retires to her room (356–8). Penelope remains long enough to heighten the dramatic irony of the bow-contest (cf. 311–58n.), but is removed just prior to the final dénouement, so as to postpone her recognition of Odysseus (cf. 350–8n.).

1–4 At first sight it may seem strange to hear that Athena inspires Penelope to set up the bow-contest, when in 19.570–81 Penelope herself had already announced it. However, what we are dealing with here is a split instance of double motivation †: the narrator marks the important moment when Penelope carries out her earlier plan by now ascribing it to Athena. In this way he also authorizes this plan, which taken in isolation could be viewed negatively; it is not only approved by Odysseus (cf. 19.582–7), but actually sanctioned by a god.

Now the exact form of *Odysseus’ revenge is finally revealed to the narratees: it is with this bow that Odysseus will kill – a considerable number of – the Suitors. The apposition ‘(to be) material for the contest and the beginning of the slaughter’ (4) does not form part of the idea which Athena puts into Penelope’s head, but is either her own focalization (for embedded focalization taking the form of an apposition, cf. II. 12.57; 15.533; and 21.28) or an intrusion by the narrator into her focalization (paralepsis †).3

5–62 This is the longest instance of the ‘storeroom’ type-scene in Homer; cf. 2.337–81 (Telemachus getting provisions for his voyage); 15.99–110 (Menelaus and Helen fetching a guest-gift for Telemachus); II. 6.288–95 (Hecuba fetching a robe for Athena); and 24.191–237 (Priam and

1 Lesky (1961: 34).
3 Scholion ad 21.1: ‘it is not Penelope who is envisaging the murdering, but the poet himself (ὅς ποιητής ὃς ἔσται) reveals what will happen’.
Hecuba fetching Hector’s ransom. It usually contains the following elements (cf. Appendix F): (i) descent; (ii) description of the storeroom; (iii) its contents; (iv) lock, sometimes guard; (v) selection of object(s); (vi) history of one of the objects; (vii) special value of the object(s) selected; (viii) return. The present instance is greatly expanded, so as to create retardation † and thereby mark this important moment: Penelope fetches the key (5–7; a unique addition, which prepares for 46–50) and (i) descends (8; the maids who accompany her will later help her carry the bow and axes: 58–62); (ii) description of the storeroom (9a; the – unique – qualification ‘furthest away’ gives the first indication of the special value of the bow); (iii) contents (9b–12, and cf. 52 and 61–2); (vi) the story of how Odysseus got the bow (13–41); Penelope reaches the storeroom, moves towards the threshold (42–5; addition); (iv) opens the lock of the door with her key (46–50; expanded through a comparison), and goes to the raised platform on which the chests stand (51–2); (v) she takes the bow from its peg (53–7; expanded into a little scene: for a moment she sits down, takes the bow out of its case, and weeps); and (viii) returns (58–62, expanded with an indication of what she and her maids are carrying).

Throughout the scene the narrator stresses that the objects in the storeroom belong to ‘the king/master of the house’ (ἐνακτως: 9, 56, and 62); as in the case of the emphatic ‘the palace of Odysseus’ (cf. 1.103–4n.), he leaves no doubt as to who is the rightful owner of all that is in the palace.

6 This is the only place where the formula χειρι παχειη, ‘with thick hand’, (eighteen times) is used of Penelope.4 The epithet, one of five found with ‘hand’, always refers to the hand in action, grasping a sword, brandishing a spear, etc. Here it suggests both Penelope’s beauty (people in beautification scenes are typically made ‘thicker’, πασσονα) and the force which she has to exert to move the key (which is of bronze and ivory, and judging by 47–50 quite heavy).

11–41 The description † of the bow, quiver, and arrows is, as usual, dynamic: the narratees are told their history in an external analepsis †. It does not create a pause: when the narrator picks up the action again (42), Penelope, who in 8 set out for the storeroom, has arrived there.

The description has the structure of a complex epic regression †:5

---

5 Friedrich (1975: 52–4) and Gaisser (1969: 21–3).
There were lying the bow and quiver, and there were many arrows inside it,

D gifts which Iphitus gave Odysseus (13–14),

C when they met in the palace of Ortilochus (15–16a).

Ba Odysseus was there on behalf of his people, to get back (16b–17)

Aa the Ithacan cattle stolen by Messenians (18–19).

Ba’ For that reason he was there, sent by his father and the elders (20–1).

Bb Iphitus was there to search for mares (22a),

Ab which had been stolen from him (22b–23).

E They were to be the cause of his death, for he was killed by Heracles, who kept the mares (24–30).

Bb’ Searching for them (31a)

C’ Iphitus met Odysseus (31b)

D’ and gave him the bow of his father Eurytus, while Odysseus gave him a sword and spear (31c–35a).

E’ Odysseus and Iphitus never entertained each other, for Iphitus was killed by Heracles (35b–38a).

F Odysseus never took the bow with him when he went to war, but left it in the palace as a memorial to his friend (38b–41).

The history of the bow makes clear its special quality; it once belonged to Eurytus, who together with Heracles was the most illustrious archer of the past (cf. 8.224–5). This assures the narratees that it will be an effective weapon for Odysseus against the Suitors. The information that Odysseus never took it with him outside Ithaca explains why it is still there; had he taken it with him to Troy, it would now have been lost. But the history may also have another significance. Much attention is given to Heracles’ killing of Iphitus (the event is told twice: E and E’). While as a rule Heracles belongs to the generation before the Trojan heroes, here he is propelled into Odysseus’ own time. He is cast into the role of bad guest-friend (comparable to the Suitors, who likewise ‘do not fear the wrath of the gods’: 28; cf. 14.82 and 20.215), as opposed to the good guest-friends Odysseus and Iphitus. It is with the guest-gift from a good friend that Odysseus will kill the Suitors, transgressors of the rites of hospitality; cf. his incapacitating that other

---

unfriendly host, the Cyclops, with a guest-gift, the wine he got from Maron (9.196–215).⁷

Odysseus’ youthful (cf. 21) expedition to reclaim stolen cattle, which can be compared to Nestor’s expedition in Il. 11.670–762, is one in a series of ‘young Odysseus’ anecdotes; cf. 1.255–64n.

The bow is sometimes seen as another *token of recognition’, like the scar or the bed.⁸ However, nowhere is its stringing presented as something which only Odysseus could do (and which would thus identify him): Penelope expects one of the Suitors to be able to do so (19.577–81 = 21.75–9, note ἡς [. . .] κέ + subjunctive) and Telemachus would have done it, if Odysseus had not signalled him not to (128–9). Also, when ‘the beggar’ has strung the bow, the Suitors are not immediately convinced that he is Odysseus (cf. 22.1–88n.). For the same reasons, the bow-contest is not another of Penelope’s tricks; cf. 19.570–81n. The stringing of the bow does have a symbolic significance, however, in that it marks anyone who manages to do so in addition to Odysseus himself as Odysseus’ equal (cf. 93–4, 116–17, 253–5, 325–6) and therefore worthy to take over his place as her husband.

28 σχετλίος, ‘harsh man’, belongs to the character-language †: only here is it used outside direct speech (where it occurs thirty times).

35–8 An instance of the ‘they invested but never enjoyed’ motif; cf. 16.119–20n.

48–50 As often, a metaphor (the door ‘roars’) triggers a comparison (‘like a bull feeding in a meadow’); cf. 19.204–9n. Cf. the ‘lowing’ of gates which are opened in Il. 5.749; 8.393; 12.460; and the ‘roaring’ of the axle of a car in Il. 5.839.

55–7 Just as for Odysseus the bow is a reminder of his friend Eurytus (cf. 40), it reminds Penelope of Odysseus himself and when she sees it she weeps; cf. Eumaeus and Philoetius in 81–3.

67–139 The first phase of the contest (cf. Introduction): Penelope announces the contest, to which Eumaeus and Philoetius react with tears, Antinous with feigned hesitation, and Telemachus with feigned youthful excitement. It serves once again to show the narratees Penelope’s love for Odysseus, the two servants’ loyalty (and presence at the scene of revenge; cf. 20.252–5n.), Antinous’ hypocrisy, and Telemachus’ shrewdness.

68–79 Before announcing the contest in words which leave no doubt

about her reluctance to remarry (73–9 ≈ 19.576–81), Penelope one more
time criticizes the Suitors, who are devouring Odysseus’ goods in his
absence (68–72). Calling the Suitors’ desire to marry her a mere pretext for
their carousing may be no more than an angry exaggeration; cf. 1.249–51n.

84–95 *Antinous (eager to see the start of the contest which he thinks he
will win) speaks hypocritical words: first he reproaches the two servants for
bothering Penelope with their tears, when she already has reason enough to
be sad. Then he says that the contest will be ‘damaging’ (cf. 152–62n.),
because no Suitor is of the same stature as Odysseus, whom he remembers
well. The hypocrisy of his last words will be explicitly exposed by the narra-
tor after his speech. At the same time, his words are fraught with dramatic
irony †: the narratees know that Penelope has not ‘lost her dear husband’,
that the contest will be ‘damaging’ in a very different sense (cf. 22.1–88n.),
that ‘a man like Odysseus was’ is amidst the Suitors, and that therefore
Antinous does not ‘remember him well’ (a special instance of the *‘forget-
ting’/’remembering’ motif).9

94–5 In 16.424–30 Penelope had recalled how Odysseus once helped
Antinous’ father, receiving him in his palace. It may have been during this
period that the young Antinous saw Odysseus.

96–100 Entering Antinous’ mind (96–7), the narrator reveals that in fact
he expects to be able to string the bow (and that his modesty in 91–5 was
therefore false); an instance of *speech evaluation. The Suitor’s secret aspi-
rintions then elicit a *narratorial intervention (98–100), which takes the
form of a highly sarcastic prolepsis †, containing *proleptic μέλλω: instead
of successfully shooting an arrow through the axes, Antinous is doomed to
be the first to be hit by one of Odysseus’ arrows. ἤτοι marks the contrast
between Antinous’ expectation and his actual fate, a contrast which is
further underlined through the echo of διοικεῖσθαι in διόστοι. Stepping
forward so openly, the narrator also turns to character-language †: ἀτιμάω,
‘dishonour’ (fifteen times in speech, only here in simple narrator-text) and
metaphorical γεύσαμαι (cf. 98n.).

98 The metaphorical use of γεύσαμαι, ‘to taste’, belongs to the character-
language †: except for this place, only in direct speech (20.181; Il. 20.258;
21.61). The use of this metaphor is very apt in connection with the ever
carousing Suitors; cf. 20.392–4n.

9 Dekker (1965: 262).
101–39 Telemachus’ participation in the contest is a retardation †: it postpones the participation of the Suitors, for whom the contest is intended (cf. 68, 73). The scene does not have the same significance for the Suitors as for the narratees. Once more Telemachus plays the role of a weak and helpless youngster (cf. 17.1–25n.): he says he takes a ‘silly’ delight in the idea of his mother remarrying (102–5) and announces that he wants to try the bow himself, so that, should he be able to string it, he would at least show himself a worthy master of the house (113–17). When he has – purposely – failed to string the bow, he – dissimulatingly – concludes that either he will always be weak or he is still too young to be able to rely on the strength of his hands (131–5). Thus the Suitors are given a false impression of the youth’s strength. To the narratees, however, the scene shows Telemachus’ real strength: he sets up the axes ‘well’ and thereby wins the admiration of the onlookers (120–3), and would have strung the bow, if it had not been for Odysseus’ intervention (128–9).10

102–17 Telemachus’ speech11 displays the reverse order †:

A 'Zeus has made me silly, for my mother announces that she will leave this house with another man ('catch-word' technique: 104 picks up 77) and I laugh and rejoice in my silly heart (102–5).
(no laughter of Telemachus had been recorded beforehand by the narrator; an instance of *emancipation of speech)

B (exhortation) But come on, Suitors, now that this is the prize, a woman such as there is no other one, (priamel) either in Achaea, or Pylos, or Argos, or Mycene, or on Ithaca or the mainland. (he cuts himself short) But you know this yourself and why would I need to praise my mother (106–10)?

B’ (exhortation) But come on, no longer turn back from the stringing of the bow (111–12).
(a reaction to Antinous’ ‘hesitation’ in 91–4)

A’ But I will (first) attempt it myself, so that, if I am able to string it, at least I do not have to grieve when my mother leaves this house with another man, knowing that I am able to take up my father’s glorious contest gear (113–17).

Four times an attempt to string the bow is described: Telemachus (here), Leodes (144–66), Eurymachus (245–59), and Odysseus (393–430), and cf. the summary account of attempts by anonymous suitors (181–5). The order of the Suitors is determined by the order in which they are served their wine (cf. 141–2 and 17.365); at the same time it is a kind of build-up: first the lesser ones may try, then it is the turn of the ringleaders. The order will be reversed during the slaughter of the Suitors: first the ringleaders, and last Leodes. The four scenes share common elements and at times wording, yet are all individually shaped, the last one, which describes the only successful attempt, diverging most. The common elements are: (i) preparations (taking off clothes, heating the bow, inspecting the bow); (ii) taking up of position; (iii) attempt; (iv) speech in which failure or success is acknowledged; (v) putting down of bow; and (vi) sitting down again (the *he sat down on the seat from which he had risen* motif in 139 and 166 underscores the ineffectiveness, feigned or real, of the attempts). Telemachus here (i) puts off his mantle and sword (118–19); (ii) takes up a position on the threshold (124; cf. 19.575, where Penelope said that Odysseus was able to shoot an arrow through the axes ‘while standing at a great distance’); (iii) at the fourth attempt would have managed to string the bow, but for Odysseus nodding (125–9); (iv) acknowledges his ‘defeat’ (130–5); (v) puts down bow and arrows (136–8); and (vi) sits down again (139).

An instance of the ‘three times X, three times Y, but the fourth time Z’ motif; cf. II. 5.436–8; 16.702–5; 20.445–7; 22.165–208: the first three attempts are unsuccessful, but as a rule the fourth is, one way or another, decisive. Here it is combined with an ‘if not’-situation †; the same combination in II. 18.155–8 + 165–8. It is a nice touch that Odysseus has to temper the youthful enthusiasm and ambition of Telemachus. The actorial motivation † of his intervention is presumably a desire to deceive his opponents about the true strength of his main helper, and the narratorial motivation †, the narrator’s wish to save the stringing of the bow – by Odysseus – for the end.

For non-verbal communication between Odysseus and Telemachus in the final books of the Odyssey, cf. 16.476–7n.

Leodes’ turn proceeds as follows (cf. 118–39n.): (ii) he takes up his position (149 = 124); (iii) his attempt fails (125–6a); (iv) in an ominous

speech he acknowledges his defeat (152–62); (v) he puts down the bow and arrows (163–5 ≈ 136–8); and (vi) sits down again (166 = 139).

144–8 The Suitor Leodes is introduced in a chunk of explicit narratorial characterization †, which is marked off by ring-composition (πρῶτος ἀνίστατο = πρῶτος . . . λάβε). He is a character doublet † of the other ‘good’ Suitor *Amphinomus. The difference between the two is that Amphinomus is merely a gentle character who tries to keep the Suitors from incidental violence against Telemachus and ‘the beggar’, while Leodes dissociates himself on principle from their ‘reckless behaviour’ (*ἀτασθαλίαι), which he hates (ἐχθραί, ‘hateful’ belongs to the character-language †, only here, as part of Leodes’ embedded focalization, outside direct speech, where it occurs six times). Therefore, the narrator can say that he was ‘the only one’ who opposed ‘all’ the Suitors. His dissent and soothsaying qualities will come to the fore in his ensuing speech (152–62). In 22.310–19 he will beg Odysseus for his life, bringing forward and expanding the information given here by the narrator. Odysseus will remain unmoved and cut off his head. Thus, like his counterpart Amphinomus, he is punished for his association with the Suitors.

Leodes’ position ‘farthest away’ symbolizes his dissociation from the other Suitors, ‘near the wine bowl’ explains why he is the first to try the bow (cf. 141–2).

150–1 The two adjectives in runover position, ‘smooth’ (ἐτρίπτους: a hapax), and ‘soft’ (ἐπαλάς, only here of hands), contain the narrator’s implicit explanation of why Leodes fails: as an augur, he apparently never joins in the normal heroic pursuits of athletics, fighting, and even manual labour (cf. 18.366–80); cf. (in stronger terms) Antinous in 172–3.

152–74 One last time (cf. 2.143–207n.), the Suitors are warned: Leodes exhorts his fellow suitors to try the bow, but in the same breath predicts that the bow will defeat them, and, exposing their hidden expectations (the τίς of 157–8 will remind the narratees of Antinous in 96–7 and not surprisingly it will be this Suitor who reacts), advises them to start wooing another woman after the contest. As usual, the warning is brushed aside.

152–62 In accordance with his status as augur, Leodes announces that the bow will ‘deprive many noblemen of their life, for it is better to die than to miss what they have been striving for all this time, viz. Penelope’; he

means this figuratively (they will ‘die’ of grief or shame when failing to string the bow; cf. Eurymachus in 248–55 and earlier, Antinous speaking about a ‘damaging’ contest: 91), but the narratees may take the expression literally (as in II. 11.334) and savour the dramatic irony † of his words. Cf. the Suitors’ ‘dying of laughter’ in 18.100.

168–80 An instance of the *‘two consecutive speeches by one speaker’ device, which allows for the emphatic marking of Antinous’ change of addressee (Melanthius instead of Leodes) and thereby underscores his rejection of Leodes’ warning.

Antinous is greatly irritated by the seer’s words: ‘if, as you say, that bow will deprive noblemen of their life (an instance of the ‘catch-word’ technique †: 170–1a = 153–4a), this is only because Leodes himself, a weakling, has failed to string the bow. But the other Suitors will string the bow.’ He completely ignores the point about their giving up the wooing of Penelope.

181–5 The execution of Antinous’ orders is faithfully described by the narrator; his custom of doing so gives him an opportunity to underscore the discrepancy between Antinous’ confidence in the outcome and the actual failure:

‘Heat a fire, bring in a chair and fleece (176–7), ≈ 181–2
bring in fat (178), ≈ 183
in order that the young men can heat the bow, Heating the bow the youths
try it and finish the contest.’ (179–80) tried it, but they could not string it (184–5).

184–5 A summarized version of the attempt of numerous anonymous Suitors; cf. 118–39n. This time the narrator explicitly indicates the cause of their failure (‘they lacked strength’); contrast his implicit explanation in 151.

188–244 The recognition of Odysseus by Eumaeus and Philoetius is an instance of the ‘interruption’ technique †:14 the narrator leaves the scene of the contest at the point when the two ringleaders are ‘still holding back’ (186–7), narrates the recognition, which takes place outside, and then returns to the contest at the moment when Eurymachus is ‘already handling the bow, warming it in the fire’ (245–6; for θήν, cf. 8.470n.). Note that for

once a storyline in the background does contain an important development: Eurymachus’ decision to partake in the contest after all; cf. Appendix B.

The scene has been more or less prepared for in 85–91, where Antinous told the two weeping servants to sit down and eat in silence or to go outside. Apparently, the two now decide that the time has come to leave the palace; they are followed by Odysseus who, in his turn, has decided that the time has now come to reveal his identity (207–20) and solicit the help of these two loyal servants for the upcoming fight (228–41).

The scene forms the concluding part of the Eumaeus and Philoetius instances of the ‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern (cf. Introduction to 14 and 20.185–240n.): we have (ii) one more test (191–205); then (iv) Odysseus reveals himself (207–16); and (vi) shows his scar as a token of recognition (217–21); unlike Telemachus and Penelope, but like Euryclea, the servants do not react with scepticism, but immediately (vii) burst into tears and kiss their master (222–5).

Throughout this scene the two servants are referred to by *significant duals (188, 192, 206, 209, 212, 222, 223, 228, 244), which underscores that they form a team.

**191–205** Although he had already received many proofs of the two servants’ loyalty, and in the case of Philoetius even a spontaneous promise of help (cf. 20.185–240n.), Odysseus tests them one more time before revealing himself. The form of his *test is tailored to the occasion, i.e., ‘the stranger’ asks the servants whether they would support Odysseus, should he suddenly turn up, or the Suitors. As in most recognitions, Odysseus mentions his own name just prior to revealing himself; cf. 8.487–98n.

The reactions of Philoetius and Eumaeus are almost verbatim repetitions of 20.235–9, where they reacted to an announcement by ‘the beggar’ of Odysseus’ return. The one line added (201) illustrates Philoetius’ focalization: he still thinks of Odysseus as absent (hence *κεῖνος) and hopes that a *δείμων will bring him home.

**207–8** Odysseus reveals himself using the typical formulation; cf. 16.205–6n.

**213–16** The reward which Odysseus offers mirrors Eumaeus’ wishes (cf. 14.62–4: a wife and a piece of land), indeed surpasses them (a house near that of Odysseus himself and a position as companions and ‘brothers’ of Telemachus); for this last element, cf. 15.363–5, (Eumaeus was raised with
almost the same affection and honour as Odysseus’ sister Ctimena) and 1.432–3 (Euryclea was treated with the same respect as Laertes’ wife).


228–41 Odysseus’ instructions to his servants is a *‘table of contents’ speech:

230–1 Go back inside, first me, then the two of you. Cf. 242–4
232–5a The Suitors will refuse to hand me the bow, but you, Eumaeus, must place it in my hands. Cf. 274–379
235b–239 and instruct the women to close the doors of their megaron. Cf. 380–7
240–41 You, Philoetius, must close the doors of the courtyard. Cf. 388–93

245–68 Now it is Eurymachus’ turn (cf. 118–39n.): (i) he carefully heats the bow (245–6a), (iii) but nevertheless fails to string it (246b–247); (iv) greatly annoyed, he admits his failure (248–55); Antinous suggests that he (v) put down the bow and adjourn the contest to the next day (256–68).

248–55 It is typical of *Eurymachus that he is annoyed not so much by the practical consequence of his failure (‘there are enough other women, both on Ithaca and in other cities’; he contradicts Telemachus’ praise of Penelope as unique: 107–9) as by the public one (their failure to match Odysseus’ strength will also bring them disgrace in the eyes of posterity). He thus shows that he is aware of the symbolic undercurrent of the contest; cf. 11–41n.

257–68 Having first suggested heating and anointing the bow (176–80), Antinous now proposes that they stop the contest after a libation and continue the next day, after a sacrifice to Apollo (of course, in order to enlist the help of the archer god; cf. Antinous’ use of the epithet κλυτοτόξω and the prayer of the archer Pandarus in Il. 4.100–21).

The insincerity of Antinous’ sudden piety (‘today is a holy day, who would think of aiming arrows?’) is easily seen through by the narratees, who may at the same time savour the dramatic irony † of the *rhetorical question: soon Odysseus will be shooting deadly arrows on Apollo’s festive day; cf. 20.276–8n.

263–73 An instance of the *‘(collective) libation’ type-scene: (i) proposal to make a libation (264); (ii) approval (269b); (iii) preparations (270–2); and (v) closing formula (273). Here the libation marks the end of the contest. It
serves as a mild form of misdirection †: the narratees are led to believe that the contest indeed has come to an end.

274–84 ‘The beggar’ asks permission to have a try at the bow, bamboozling (cf. δολοφρονέων in the speech-introduction) the Suitors by stating as his motive the wish to test his strength (not to win the prize, Penelope) and stressing his age (‘bent limbs’: 283) and poor physical condition as a result of his wandering and lack of proper care (which makes it highly improbable that he will succeed); cf. the dissimulation of his real forces in 18.51–7 (which likewise has δολοφρονέων in the speech-introduction). The narratees, connecting these words to Odysseus, may take them as truthful: it is not illogical that he, prior to his deadly use of the bow, does wish to test his strength as an archer after his years of wanderings (cf. his concern about his condition as a runner in 8.231–3); cf. his inspection of the bow in 394–5.

285–379 Despite ‘the beggar’s’ comforting words, the Suitors (forewarned by the ‘Irus’ incident of 18.1–158 and the ‘beggar’s’ confident challenge in 18.366–86) fear that he might be successful (286) and, as Odysseus foresaw (cf. 233), Antinous (288–310) and Eurymachus (321–9) oppose his trying the bow. Only through the interventions of Penelope (312–19, 331–42) and Telemachus (344–53) does the bow finally end up in Odysseus’ hands.

The scene (i) is one more retardation †, in that the climactic moment of Odysseus being handed his own bow is deferred for a hundred lines (cf. Introduction), (ii) offers delightful instances of dramatic irony † (cf. 311–58n.), and (iii) once again gives proof of the bad manners of the Suitors, who deny a man of noble birth the opportunity to show his worth (cf. Penelope’s criticism in 312–13), and of Penelope’s hospitality, who wants ‘the stranger’ to be treated with respect.

288–310 *Antinous, in accordance with his unsubtle character, turns to abuse in his attempt to deflect ‘the beggar’ from participating, combining the well-known arguments of (i) ‘the beggar’ is behaving above his station and (ii) will meet with violence; cf. 17.217–312n. His speech displays a ring-composition †:

A You have no sense. Are you not content to quietly sit amongst us, eating, and even listening to our talk (288–92)?

B The wine drives you out of your mind, which leads astray others, too (293–4),
(mythical example) such as the Centaur Eurytion, who met with ill through his drunkenness (295–304).

In like way I foresee misery for you, if you manage to string the bow, for I will send you to the cruel king Echetus (305–9a).

So quietly drink your wine and do not vie with younger men (309b–310).

Earlier Melantho (18.331) and Eurymachus (18.391) also had explained ‘the beggar’s’ self-assured behaviour as caused by drunkenness. Now this point receives its fullest treatment. For drinking harming people, cf. Elpenor in 10.552–60.

The story of the fight between Centaurs and Lapiths is twice referred to elsewhere in Homer (Il. 1.260–73 and 2.743–6), both instances concerning its end, the defeat of the Centaurs by the Lapiths. Here Antinous starts at its beginning, the drunken misbehaviour of one Centaur, Eurytion. As usual, the embedded story † is told allusively, while the contextually relevant aspects are expanded. The centaur Eurytion came to the palace of the Lapith Peirithous and became drunk (the reason why he came, viz. Peirithous’ marriage to Hippodamea, is left out). In his crazy drunkenness he did bad things (exactly what he did, trying to rape Hippodamea, is left out). The Lapiths became angry, dragged him out of the palace and cut off his ears and nose (this detail is found nowhere else, but is contextually relevant; cf. below). Eurytion went away, carrying with him his ate. As a result of the incident, the Centaurs and Lapiths fought and Eurytion himself met with disaster because of his drunkenness (what the disaster is, the Centaurs’ defeat, is left out).

Antinous tells the story by way of dissuasive paradigm (‘argument’ function †): ‘the beggar’ had better take care that he does not bring evil on himself the way Eurytion did, for if he strings the bow Antinous will send him to king Echetus (who the narratees know from 18.86–7 cuts off the ears, nose and genitals of his victims). The story may also have a ‘key’ function †: it is an instance of the *disturbed meal* motif and anticipates the death of the Suitors; for them too, a banquet will turn into a massacre.

For the threat to sell someone as slave in a foreign country, cf. 17.249–50. In the particular case of Odysseus, it is a perversion of the escort of a guest; cf. Introduction to 17.

---

15 Büchner (1940: 161), Dekker (1965: 266), and Clarke (1967: 76).
All of a sudden, Penelope, who since 80 has been present as a silent character †, joins the discussion. The conversation has the ‘domino’ form †:

Penelope A Antinous, it is not just to treat guests of Telemachus improperly (312–13). (her remark prepares for Telemachus’ intervention in 343ff.)

B Do you really think that, if this stranger strings the bow, he will *take me* home and make me his wife? He neither intends so himself nor should any of you let his appetite be spoilt by the thought, for *it is not likely* (314–19).

Eurymachus B’ We do not think that this man will *take you* with him; *it is not likely* (321–2) (*catch-word’ technique †: ἄξεσθαι ... ὀὐδὲ ἔοικεν picks up ἄξεσθαι in 316 and ὀὐδὲ μὲν ὀὐδὲ ἔοικε in 319)

C But we fear the talk of the people, who will say: ‘Far lesser men are courting the wife of an excellent man. They cannot string his bow, but someone else, a wandering beggar can.’ This talk would be *a shame* on us (323–9).

Penelope C’ Eurymachus, there is in any case no chance for you to gain a good reputation, who are dishonourably destroying the house of a noble man. So why be concerned about *that shame*? (*catch-word’ technique: ἔλεγχε ... ταῦτα picks up ἔλεγχον) That man is big and strongly built and claims to be the son of a noble father (331–5). (she corrects Eurymachus’ disparaging ‘a wandering beggar’)

D So give him the bow. If he strings it, I will give him clothes and an escort (336–42). (she comes up with an alternative prize for ‘the stranger’, which is more suited to his status)

Telemachus D’ Mother, no one is more entitled than I am to give or withhold the bow, neither the rulers of Ithaca nor those on the islands off Elis. Of these no one can force me, should I want to give the bow. But go to your room. The bow will be the concern of the men, and of me in particular (344–53).

As before (cf. 16.55–89n.), other people talk about ‘the beggar’ in his presence (cf. τὸνδ’: 322, ὠτὸς ... ξεῖνος: 334) but without addressing him; the technique of indirect dialogue †.
Penelope’s intervention on behalf of ‘the beggar’ offers dramatic irony †, when she emphatically denies that ‘the beggar’ intends to make her his wife and when she urges them to give him the bow (thereby once again unwittingly furthering Odysseus’ revenge).

321–9 Instead of Antinous, it is *Eurymachus who answers Penelope; cf. 16.434–47. Typically, he shows concern for the Suitors’ reputation: while in 253–5 he feared ‘disgrace’ (ἐλεγχεύη) in the eyes of posterity, should they fail to string the bow, here he fears ‘disgrace’ (ἐλέγχειά) in the eyes of the population, should ‘the beggar’ be able to do what they cannot.

324–9 A *potential τις-speech. Since these speeches represent the feelings of the speaker himself, this instance makes clear that Eurymachus in fact knows himself that the Suitors are inferior to ‘the beggar’; cf. Menelaus in 4.333–46, Penelope in 20.82.

338 For the ‘Apollo’ motif, cf. 20.276–8n.

339–42 The alternative prize which Penelope here proposes consists of the same guest-gift of clothes, sandals, sword, and an escort as that which Telemachus had promised ‘the beggar’ before (16.78–81). For the motif of ‘the gift of clothes’, cf. 14.122–32n.

350–8 Telemachus’ intervention, removing his mother from the contest which she herself organized, recalls 1.345–64. The narratorial motivation † for this intervention is clear enough: he wishes to postpone the recognition of husband and wife (cf. Introduction to 19). But what about Telemachus’ actorial motivation †: (i) is he genuinely irritated by his mother interfering in the men’s business; (ii) does he want to assert himself vis-à-vis the Suitors, to whom his words 344–9 seem directed (indirect dialogue †); or (iii) does he want to remove his mother from the place where – he knows – the bloody revenge will soon be executed?

Penelope’s absence from the climax of the story recalls Andromache, who is also the only one not to witness the death of her husband Hector in Iliad 22 and who is removed from the scene of action with almost the same words (350–3 ≈ Il. 6.490–3). Penelope is not only absent but is asleep (cf. 1.362–4n.), which must keep her from hearing from her upper room what is happening in themegaron (cf. 17.492–3).

359–79 Eumaeus’ execution of Odysseus’ first order, to carry the bow to him (cf. 234–5), leads to another retardation †: the Suitors intimidate him (361–5) and he puts the bow down again. Only threatening words from Telemachus (369–75) make him continue his task and in 379 he finally puts the bow in Odysseus’ hands.
362–5 Their *actual *tis*-speech once again marks the Suitors as (i) uncivilized (not only do they intend to kill Eumaeus, but also to deprive him of a proper burial, feeding his body to his own dogs; cf., e.g., II. 22.66–71) and (ii) blind (they still expect, cf. ἐὰν κευ + subjunctive, that the gods will favour them, i.e., make them win the contest).

369–78 Speaking threatening words to Eumaeus, Telemachus takes this opportunity to add a wish concerning the Suitors: if only he were able to surpass all of them in strength just as he surpasses the swineherd, he would expel them ‘in dire manner’ from the palace. It is this passionate, but – in their eyes – impotent wish which makes the Suitors laugh, and thereby give up their opposition to letting ‘the beggar’ try the bow. The narratees know that Telemachus’ wish will soon be fulfilled and in an even more violent way than announced here; thus the Suitors’ characteristic *laughter can be seen by them as another careless shrugging off of a warning (cf. 2.143–207n.).

380–93 The patience of the narratees is taxed one more time, when the narrator leaves the scene in which Odysseus finally holds the bow in his hand, to report Eumaeus’ and Philoetius’ execution of Odysseus’ orders in 235–41. This is an instance of the ‘interruption’ technique †: when he returns to Odysseus, the latter is ‘already’ (cf. 8.469–586n.) handling the bow.

Eumaeus instructs Euryclea to close the doors of the women’s megaron (380–7) and Philoetius closes the courtyard door (388–93b). Both servants show cleverness in the way they perform the orders: Eumaeus tells Euryclea that it is Telemachus who gives the order (whereas in fact it was Odysseus; the swineherd does not know that Euryclea knows about ‘the beggar’ s true identity); Philoetius silently leaves the megaron and uses the cable of a ship, which happens to be lying in the courtyard, to provide the bond which Odysseus had asked for.

392–3 The *‘he sat down on the seat from which he had risen’ motif, here is given an individual twist through the addition of ‘looking at Odysseus’. Philoetius’ gaze presumably expresses the same sentiment as that of Telemachus in 385–6: having just been informed about the upcoming revenge (cf. 213), he eagerly waits for Odysseus to move into action.

393–434 The final, successful attempt (by Odysseus) proceeds as follows (cf. 118–39n.): (i) he inspects the bow (393–404, expanded through comments by the Suitors); (iii) successfully strings the bow (405–9, expanded
through a simile and a comparison) and shoots an arrow through the axes (410–23a, no other competitor had reached this phase); (iv) in a speech he acknowledges his victory and announces further action (423b–430); (v–vi) instead of putting down the bow and sitting down again, he nods at Telemachus, who arms himself and takes up a position next to him (431–4), while he himself jumps to the threshold (22.1–4).

393–404 The Suitors collectively give expression to their focalization of ‘the stranger’ inspecting the bow, in two consecutive *actual tis*-speeches; for such a combination, cf. 2.323–37. In the first (397–400) they come up with explanations for his behaviour, which the narratees, informed by the narrator in the form of Odysseus’ embedded focalization † (395, shifter: μη + optative; ‘to see whether worms had not eaten the horn during his years of absence’), know misses the truth: maybe he is an expert in bows (note the generalizing plural), has one like that (note the vague plural τοιαύτα) at home, or wants to make one. The speech is doubly ironic: there is the irony † of the speakers, who mockingly ascribe to the poor beggar an expertise in or possession of a heroic weapon; and the dramatic irony † understood by the narratees, who know that ‘the stranger’/Odysseus is ‘an expert in bows’ and has ‘things like that’ at home.16

The second tis-speech (402–3) is again ironic: their wish (‘would that he found good in the same measure as he will ever be able to string the bow’) in fact serves to express their certainty that he will never string the bow (cf. 9.523–5n.).

405–23 The ease with which Odysseus strings the bow – apprehensively foreseen by Eurymachus in 328 – is stressed several times: 407, 409, and 420 (he shoots ‘from his chair’, i.e., without standing up, like the others, cf. 8.186, where he throws the discus ‘with his mantle on’) and also suggested by the sudden speed of narration; after the many retardations which make up the contest, the climax takes place in a few lines.

406–9 The primary function of this simile † is to emphasize the ease with which Odysseus strings the bow (ῥηιδίως≈ἀτερ σπουδής), cf. the comparison of a child turning over a sandcastle, which describes the ease with which Apollo destroys the Greek wall in Il. 15.361–6. It has at least two secondary functions.17 (i) It forms the climax of a series of passages in which

---

16 Dekker (1965: 268–70).
Odysseus is compared to a singer (cf. 11.363–9n.). Inserting an image of himself at this climactic moment, the narrator subtly suggests his own importance: ‘where would Odysseus’ glory be, if there were no singers to immortalize it?’ (ii) It is an instance of the *disturbed meal* motif: a singer is a stock element of the Homeric festive meal, but this archer/singer is particularly suited to the ‘meal’ which Odysseus is about to dish up for the Suitors (cf. 429–30). The behaviour of the Suitors forms a perversion of the customs of the meal and will be met by a similar reversal on the part of Odysseus. The association of bow and lyre is of course facilitated through Apollo – evoked so often on this day (cf. 20.276–8n.) – who takes both to hand.

411 Comparing the sound of the bowstring being tested by Odysseus to that of a (twittering) swallow, the narrator creates a grim contrast with the violent context in which the bow will soon be used. The image of the swallow continues the imagery of the proceeding simile in that this bird is a singing bird and often associated with human singers. Like the nightingale (cf. 19.518–22), the swallow is also considered the herald of spring, and it may be no coincidence that it appears at this climactic moment of Odysseus’ nostos.18

413–15 Once more (cf. 20.103–121n.), Zeus shows his support, this time spontaneously. Odysseus’ joyful reaction is recorded. Zeus’s thunder heralds victory, as so often in the Iliad (cf. 8.170–1; 11.45–6; 15.377–8; and 17.595–6). The *omen reassures the narratees as regards the success and the justification of Odysseus’ upcoming bloody revenge.

417–18 A narratorial prolepsis †, containing the typical *proleptic μέλλω. The narrator indulges in ironic understatement at this moment just before the revenge: soon the Suitors will ‘experience’ the arrows, i.e., be killed by them.

421–3 Odysseus’ successful shot is described in the emphatic, polar manner found in so many Iliadic battle scenes: he did not miss, but the arrow went through the axes.

423–30 In the first half of his speech Odysseus describes his victory in a series of negative statements, which show him – finally – reacting to the events of the last days: his guest does not bring disgrace upon his host Telemachus (cf. the Suitors’ teasing Telemachus with his worthless guest: 18 Losada (1985).
I did not miss the axes nor take long to string the bow (as the Suitors had expected; Odysseus now adopts proud first-person forms), my strength is still intact (cf. 282–4) and not as the Suitors scornfully say it is (cf. 20.378b–379). Reacting here to the Suitors’ slighting him as a beggar, he will soon come to speak of their crimes against him as Odysseus (22.35–41).

In the second half of his speech he makes a veiled announcement of the upcoming battle, couching his murderous intentions in ironic metaphors: it is time for an ‘evening meal’ (cf. 20.392–4n.; the addition ‘during daytime’ hints that this will be no ordinary meal) and for ‘amusing ourselves with dance and lyre’ (after the comparison of Odysseus’ bow with a lyre in 406–10, it is not difficult for the narratees to understand that he is referring to a fight).

Finally Telemachus receives the signal he has been impatiently waiting for; cf. 20.385–6.

For communication through gestures, cf. 16.476–7n.
This book continues the long fortieth day of the *Odyssey* (cf. Introduction to 20) and finally brings the fulfilment of *Odysseus’* revenge on the Suitors, anticipated from Book 1 onwards. The revenge turns out to involve both cunning (Odysseus uses the bow to make a first surprise hit) and force (having run out of arrows, he fights a regular battle); it thus is a special variant of the *‘cunning versus force’* theme. His bloody revenge forms the climax of the action of the *Odyssey*, but as in the case of Hector’s death in the *Iliad*, the story does not stop there: still to come are the reunion with Penelope and Laertes, and the settlement with the families of the Suitors; cf. Introduction to 24.

The revenge unfolds in three ‘acts’: Odysseus’ disclosure of his identity and the first skirmishes (1–98), the battle in which all the Suitors are killed (99–389), and the aftermath, consisting of the execution of the unfaithful servants and the cleaning of the palace (390–501). The order of the killings is the exact reverse of the order of the contestants in the bow-contest, cf. 21.118–39n.


The structure of the battle-scenes is symmetrical to a degree not found in the *Iliad*:¹ the killings of Antinous and Eurymachus are doublets (8–88n.),

¹ Fenik (1974: 146–8).
twice armour is fetched from the storeroom (99–115, 139–202), we have two pairs of spear-throws (255–9, 265–71 and 272–80, 281–92), a pair of killings by father and son (292–3 and 294–6), and a pair of contrasting similes (299–301, 302–8).

One major difference from the *Iliad* is that this battle does not take place on a spacious battlefield, but within a closed room. Odysseus takes up a strategic position on the *threshold of the megaron* (2), from which the Suitors try to remove him, in order to escape and get help from town (75–8, 90–1, 107, 171–2, 203). This situation is repeated on a smaller scale in connection with the little side door (126–38). At 270 the Suitors are forced to retreat to the outer corners of the *megaron*, and in 299, after Athena’s intervention, they flee in panic all over the *megaron* until they are all killed ‘like fish in a net’ (384–9). Also, the furniture is made part of the battle: Antinous kicks back a table, while Eurymachus sprawls over one, for a while the Suitors use the tables as shields, Medon crouches under a chair, and the suppliants Phemius and Medon seat themselves on Zeus’ altar in the courtyard.

The narrator faces a difficult task in the *mnesterophonia*: how can it be made plausible that four men kill over a hundred opponents? And how can he avoid an all too predictable course of events, given that Odysseus’ victory was preordained by fate?2 Dealing with the first point, he has Odysseus kill the two ringleaders first; had him take the precaution of removing the arms from the *megaron*; gives him a divine helper, Athena (who had long before pledged her help: 13.393–6 and 20.48–51); and shrewdly disposes of most killings in the form of summaries (116–18, 241–6) or a simile (302–8). As regards the second point, he creates *suspense through retardations †*: Athena does not help Odysseus immediately, Odysseus failed to leave behind arms for Telemachus and himself, and Telemachus inadvertently leaves open the door to the armoury, thus allowing the Suitors to arm themselves.

This episode displays a repeated and dramatic use of embedded focalization †: we have the Suitors noticing that the arms have gone (25) and looking around for a way to escape (43); Odysseus seeing that the Suitors are arming themselves (148–9), then looking around and concluding that all the Suitors have been killed (383–9); and Euryclea taking in the sight of a blood-spattered Odysseus amid the bodies of the dead Suitors (401–8).

---

2 Bassett (1918a) and Schmitz (1994: 13–14).
In the course of the revenge, all the ‘crimes’ (or, better, disruptions of the social order) of the Suitors, which we have come across so often in the course of the story so far, are rehearsed once more, so as to convince the narratees of the justice of their death: (i) devouring Odysseus’ goods (36; cf. 1.106–12n.); (ii) sleeping with his maids (37; cf. 18.325; 20.6–8); (iii) wooing his wife while he himself is still alive (38; cf. 1.249–51n.); (iv) trying to kill Telemachus (53; cf. 4.658–74n.); and (v) dishonouring guests (414–15; cf. Introduction to 17).

The delayed recognition of Odysseus by the Suitors (cf. Introduction to 17) finds its dénouement in special variants of the (iv) self-identification and (v) scepticism elements. Instead of immediately revealing himself, Odysseus addresses the Suitors in veiled terms, continuing the use of ironic metaphors, which he just employed vis-à-vis Telemachus (21.428–30); the ‘damaging’ contest is over (he ironically quotes Antinous’ own words in 21.91) and now he intends to ‘hit’ another ‘mark’, which no man has hit before (5–7). Between the moment Odysseus aims his arrow at Antinous (8) and the moment it hits him (15), the narrator zooms in on this Suitor, who is about to take a sip of wine (9–14). This point in time, emphasized through the use of *interruptive μελλω and retardation † (his goblet is given three epithets), is symbolic (the Suitors have been eating and drinking throughout the story). Antinous’ insouciance is explicitly noted by the narrator (‘he did not think of death’) and explained – almost excused – in the form of a rhetorical question: ‘indeed, who would expect that a man alone amongst many would kill him?’ (12–14). When Odysseus has shot Antinous (15–21), the Suitors think that it is an accident and still do not realize that ‘the stranger’ is Odysseus (21–32a). Their ignorance of the true situation is explicitly noted by the narrator (32b–33). Odysseus then finally reveals himself, using not his customary formulation (‘I have come back in the twentieth year, after suffering much’), but an appropriate variant: ‘you did not think that I would come back and therefore have done me all kinds of wrong’ (34–41). Eurymachus reacts with scepticism: ‘if in truth you are Odysseus of Ithaca who has come back’ (45; for this type of sceptical ελ- clause, cf. 23.36n.), and cf. ‘this/that man’ (70, 78; cf. 248 and 23.84). His scepticism is of a different type than that of Odysseus’ philoi (who fear to be

---

deceived): he wants to exhort his fellow-suitors to fight and therefore tries to
play down the danger (this man is not the dreaded Odysseus after all).

2 For the strategic importance of the *threshold, cf. Introduction.

7 For the ‘Apollo’ motif, cf. 20.276–8n.

8–88 The killings of the two ringleaders (8–21 and 79–88) are doublets †:
they are the only two bow-slayings which are narrated in detail, both deaths
are grisly, and both men knock food off the tables onto the floor. Variation is
achieved by making Antinous die unawares while Eurymachus is killed at
the very moment he tries to attack Odysseus, and by Antinous kicking the
table away as he falls while Eurymachus falls backwards over a table.

12–14 Rhetorical questions in Homer occur mainly in speeches
(3.113–14, 216–24; 4.443, 703, 710; 5.100–1; 8.208; 10.383–5, 573–4, and
21.259), occasionally in narrator-text (here, Il. 17.260–1; 22.202–4). When
used by the narrator the device becomes a forceful *narratorial interven-
tion. Here it not only explains Antinous’ insouciance, but also calls attention
to the highly unexpected – and admirable – nature of Odysseus’ feat, attack-
ing singlehandedly a multitude of opponents; a triumphant instance of the
*‘one against many’ motif.

13–14 The embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘would think’) of the ‘who’
triggers the emotional ‘miserable death and dark doom’ instead of the usual
‘death and dark doom’.

21–5 The Suitors (desiring to punish ‘the stranger’ for his killing of
Antinous: cf. 26–30) now detect that the arms have been removed from the
megaron; cf. 19.1–52n. After a brief moment of improvisation (74–5), they
will be furnished with weapons (139–49), in order to make Odysseus’
victory a real one, rather than a walkover against defenceless men.

25 τοῦ, ‘somewhere’, belongs to the character-language †: twenty times
in direct speech, nine times in embedded focalization (4.639; 5.439; 22.25; Il.
3.450; 4.88; 5.168; 13.456, 760; 17.681), only twice in simple narrator-text
(18.7; Il. 11.292). The focalization of the Suitors may be further reflected in
the fact that whereas in 19.4 Odysseus had talked about weapons in general,
here the first thing we hear about is a shield: they look for something to
protect themselves against Odysseus’ arrows; cf. 74–5, where Eurymachus
suggests they use tables for that purpose.

26–43 Verbal echoes underscore the dramatic irony †, the Suitors
threatening their avenger with revenge:
Suitors ‘Now your steep death is secure, because you killed the best of the Ithacan youths (26–31a).’
narrator Thus they spoke, thinking that he had killed Antinous inadvertently. But the fools did not know that the ropes of death were fastened on them all (31b–33).
Odysseus ‘You thought I would never come back, but now the ropes of death are fastened on you all (34–41).’
narrator They became pale with fear and looked around for a way to escape steep death (42–3).

At this dramatic high point the narrator turns to character-language †: ἦ in 31 (only here and in II. 16.46 outside direct speech), *νηστίοι, ‘fools’, in 32, and ‘the ropes of death were fastened’ in 33 (only here outside direct speech, where it occurs five times).

26–32 The Suitors react with a collective speech. The idea that ‘the beggar’ killed Antinous by accident forms the climax of a series of misinterpretations by the Suitors of ‘the beggar’s’ actions: cf. 21.287–310 (Antinous calls him drunk, when he asks to participate in the contest) and 396–400 (they think that he is a connoisseur or a thief, when he carefully inspects the bow).

31–3 An emphatic narratorial intervention, in the form of a comment, which conflates two motifs: ‘they said A, but did not know how things really were’ (cf. 4.772; 13.170; 23.152), and ‘he/they thought A, the fool(s), and did not know that it was B’ (cf. II. 2.37–40).4

35–67 A ‘trial’: Odysseus’ indictment (35–41), Eurymachus’ defence (45–59), and Odysseus’ verdict (61–7).

35–41 In his ‘indictment’ Odysseus lists three of the Suitors’ *crimes: (i) devouring his goods, (ii) sleeping with his maids (for the imprecision in ‘forcefully’, cf. 16.108–11n.), and (iii) wooing his wife while he himself is still alive.

Like Eumaeus (14.81–92) and Philoetius (20.215), Odysseus brands the behaviour of the Suitors as godless, and in 413, like Telemachus (1.378–80 = 2.143–5; 18.235–42), Penelope (23.62–8), Laertes (24.351–2), and Medon (24.443–4), he will claim that therefore their punishment is willed by the

4 Besslich (1966: 25–8).
gods. This interpretation is nowhere explicitly confirmed by the narrator, but we have Athena’s strong condemnation of the Suitors and her constant support of Odysseus and Telemachus the avengers, as well as Zeus’s supportive ‘signs’; cf. 1.224–9n.

42–4 The *(all) the others . . . but X (alone) . . .* motif singles out Eurymachus, who is the only one not looking for flight but reacting to Odysseus’ self-identification. Contrast the collective speech of the Suitors just before (26–31).

45–59 *Eurymachus uses his diplomatic talents one last time: he tries to appease Odysseus by saying that he is right to be angry, dismissing the Suitors’ wooing as ‘reckless behaviour’ (*δαρασθελλα*), putting all the blame on the dead Antinous, and finally offering ample recompense (cf. Telemachus’, Eumaeus’, and Penelope’s complaint that the Suitors are devouring Odysseus’ goods ‘without recompense’: 1.160, 337; 2.142; 14.377, 417; and 18.280).

49–53 For the Suitors’ motives in wooing Penelope, cf. 1.249–51n.; for Antinous’ aspirations, cf. 1.386–7n.

60–7 Odysseus rejects Eurymachus’ offer of a settlement in the form of the *’(not) even + hyperbole’ motif: *not even if you gave me (catch-word technique †: ἀποδότε picks up ἀποδόσωμεν of 58) your whole* patrimony and more, would I desist from killing you’; cf. Iliad 22.349–54.5

At the same time, his speech is the typical challenge before a duel (cf., e.g., Iliad 5.632–46, 647–54; 6.119–236; 7.224–43; and esp. 22.260–72, where Achilles likewise rejects a plea from his opponent and challenges him to fight).6 Such challenges usually end with a set of alternatives (‘kill or be killed’) and/or a self-confident prediction (‘but I think that I will win’), which here take the form of ‘fight or flee, but I do not think that anyone will be able to escape my hands’.

69–78 Seeing that a confrontation is inevitable, Eurymachus now turns to his fellow-suitors with a *parainesis* (cf. 10.174–7; 12.206–22; and, e.g., Iliad 15.485–500, 501–14):7 urgent address (‘friends’) – situation (‘I call on you, for this man is not going to stop until he has killed us all’) – call to action (‘so let us remember our fighting spirit’). He adds strategic advice: even if they

---

5 Race (1982: 37).
have no shields or spears (cf. 24–5), they can draw their swords and use the tables to protect themselves; next, they should try to force Odysseus away from the door, so as to flee the megaron and get help in town.

79–83 This scene illustrates why in Homer arrows so often are called ‘quick’ (cf., e.g., 3.246; and 24.178): Odysseus kills Eurymachus even before the latter can reach him.

89–98 After two bow-killings by Odysseus, the narrator strives for variation by having Telemachus kill a third Suitor with his spear. His killing of Amphinomus had been anticipated in 18.155–6.

Warriors usually retract their spear from the body of their victim, cf., e.g., Il. 4.529–30; 5.620–1, 859; 6.65; 12.395. Here Telemachus does not yet feel safe enough to do so (contrast: 271), and the loss of his spear naturally leads on to the next scene, in which he suggests that they fetch arms.

90–1 For the importance of the door, cf. Introduction.

99–202 Odysseus’ failure to leave behind arms for himself and Telemachus (cf. 19.1–52n.) now adds to the tension of the battle-scene: Telemachus announces that he will fetch arms, Odysseus urges him to hurry, fearing that he may run out of arrows and be driven from the door, Telemachus gets the arms and they arm themselves. Melanthius then starts fetching arms for the Suitors. When Odysseus notices that they are arming themselves, he momentarily loses heart. He calls upon Telemachus, who must confess that he has left the door of the armoury open. Telemachus urges Eumaeus to find out who is fetching the arms. Eumaeus immediately sees it is Melanthius and, together with Philoetius, captures him.

In order to evoke the feverish atmosphere, the narrator turns to a jerky kind of narration, which is also found in 16.328–412: Odysseus’ instructions to Eumaeus are merely summarized (129); the arming of the Suitors is not first described by the narrator, but immediately focalized by Odysseus (148); and the fact that Telemachus left the door open (154–6) is not first mentioned by the narrator, and therefore comes just as unexpectedly for the narratees as for Odysseus (an instance of emancipation of speech).

100 The speech-introduction with ‘standing near’ introduces secretive words.

104 As often, a speech ends with a gnomic utterance.

113–14 Telemachus’ arming is described cursorily (113), instead of in the form of an ‘arming’ type-scene. For the summarized (‘in like way’) version of the arming of Eumaeus and Philoetius (114), cf. 3.64n.
122–5 Odysseus’ arming resembles that of Teucer in *Il.* 15.479–82. Because of time pressure, both warriors put on shield, helmet, and spear(s), but no greaves or corslet.

126–38 The scene around the little side door is a minor doublet of that around the door of the *megaron:* the side door is guarded by a member of Odysseus’ party (here: Eumaeus); one of the Suitors suggests trying to escape through the door and get help (133–4 ≈ 77–8); but the strategy fails (this time even before it has been attempted; Melanthius calls it impossible). The scene is inserted by way of retardation † and in order to motivate the Suitors’ arming (since they cannot call in help from outside, they will have to fight themselves).

126–8 For the ‘there is a place X’ motif, cf. 3.293–6n.

131–41 After the death of the two ringleaders, *Agelaus takes over the command until he is killed in 292–3.

135–46 The bad servant *Melanthius of course sides with the Suitors.

140–1 The narratees know from 19.1–52 that Odysseus and Telemachus have put the arms in the storeroom. As focalized by Melanthius, this information becomes a guess (‘I think’).

148 A unique, focalized (and summarized) variant of the ‘arming’ type-scene: Odysseus – to his dismay – sees the Suitors putting on armour.

150–202 Within the fast-moving scene of the arming of the Suitors (99–202n.), the capture of *Melanthius is told slowly and in great detail; cf. the ample narration of the punishment of the unfaithful maids in 390–501:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Odysseus</th>
<th>One of the maids is helping the Suitors or Melanthius (150–2).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telemachus</td>
<td>I was the one who left open the door of the armoury, but, Eumaeus, close the door and find out whether one of the maids is doing this or Melanthius (153–9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eumaeus (as focalizer)</td>
<td>Eumaeus saw Melanthius moving towards the storeroom to fetch new arms (160–2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eumaeus</td>
<td>It is Melanthius who is moving towards the storeroom, just as we thought. Shall I kill him or bring him to you to punish him (163–9)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odysseus</td>
<td>Telemachus and I will stay here and defend the door, you and Philoetius must bind him and throw him into the storeroom (170–7).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

178–202 The execution of Odysseus’ orders (173–7) is told by the narrator in detail (twenty-three lines versus four):
At first glance, one element of Odysseus’ orders seems to be lacking: the fastening of boards to Melanthius (174b); since the action seems implied, however, in Eumaeus’ ironic ‘laid to rest on a soft bed’ (196), it must have been carried out all the same, without being recorded by the narrator.

Thenarratortwiceturnstocharacter-language†todescribeMelanthius’ bonds: θυμαλγὴς, ‘grievous’ (191; nine times in direct speech, three times in embedded focalization, 8.272; 18.347 = 20.285, only here in simple narrator-text) and ὀλοῦς, -οῖς, ‘painful’ (200; twenty-nine times in direct speech, six times in embedded focalization, and four times in simple narrator-text); in this way he indicates that Odysseus’ wish of 177 (‘in order that he may suffer harsh pains’) is fulfilled.

184–6 Once again, the narratees are reminded of *Laertes’ existence, to prepare for his appearance in Book 24. As in most of the glimpses they are offered of this character, stress is laid on his age and poor physical condition, here symbolized by his old, mildewed, and decayed shield. The shield and its owner recall the dog Argus, covered with ticks and lying on a pile of dung (17.296–300), all three illustrating the neglect of Odysseus’ oikos during his absence. In contrast to the dog, however, who dies after seeing Odysseus, Laertes will be rejuvenated and successfully participate in the battle.
An instance of the *‘X acted as Y ordered’ motif.

The victorious Eumaeus takes leave of his defeated opponent with a vaunt which, as so often, takes the form of mockery (cf., e.g., 18.100–7 and *H.* 16.744–50): the ‘soft bed’ ironically refers to the boards fastened to Melanthius (cf. 174), and, in general, to his highly uncomfortable position; the suggestion that the goatherd will ‘watch the night’ and that ‘dawn will not escape him’ are Eumaeus’ version of Odysseus’ wish that the servant suffer pains ‘for a long time’ (177). The specification of dawn as ‘the time when you are wont to drive your goats to the palace to become the Suitors’ meal’ recalls the reason for his punishment. Melanthius will be executed in 474–7.

Before returning to the battle the narrator notes once again the strategic and numerical positions of the two parties. The ‘four against many’ (a variant of the *‘one against many’ motif) serves to increase the tension; the odds are still against Odysseus and his men.

An instance of a *‘god meets mortal’ scene: Athena takes on a mortal disguise, appropriately that of the loyal Ithacan and close friend of Odysseus *Mentor* (206); a dialogue ensues, during which her disguise is seen through by Odysseus, but not by the Suitors (207–35); and her departure has something of the supernatural about it (239–40). Divine interventions on the battlefield are legion in the *Iliad*, mainly, as here, for purposes of exhortation; cf., e.g., *H.* 13.89–125.

The dialogue is full of *double entendres*, the result of the fact that Odysseus knows ‘Mentor’s’ true identity, while the Suitors do not. Odysseus asks for help in words which suit both Mentor and Athena: (Mentor) ‘help me, because we are old friends and of the same age’ (cf. 2.225–7)/(Athena) ‘help me, because I have often done you good’ (i.e., brought sacrifices; for Odysseus’ piety, cf. 1.60–2). ‘Mentor’/Athena does not answer, but instead is accosted by Agelaus. Not knowing that he is addressing a goddess, this Suitor turns to bullying: ‘when you help Odysseus, this will be your death. We will divide your goods, kill your sons, and chase your wife and daughters’ (for a Suitor bullying an Ithacan, cf. 2.177–207). Athena significantly does not answer; the Suitors are done for, and are no longer worth conversing with (cf. Telemachus’ superior silence in 20.275 and 384–5). Instead she now turns to Odysseus and exhorts him in...
a parainesis (cf. 69–78n.): situation (‘Your warlike strength and valour have disappeared, which you had before Troy. Now you are at home and facing the Suitors, so why should you wail for valour?’) – call to action (‘But come over here, dear one, and I will repay your kindness’; a reference to Odysseus’ claim in 209). Her speech suits both Mentor (note especially the emphatic third-person self-reference at the end) and Athena (who is more likely to recall Odysseus’ Trojan valour than Mentor, who never left Ithaca).

As is his wont, the narrator leaves no doubt about Athena’s true identity: τὴν (207 and 212) and Ἄθηνη/Αθηνα (205 and 224); cf. 1.118n.

In fact, Athena does not immediately make good her promise of help (233–5), but first withdraws from the battle (239–40). The narrator assures his narratees that in the end all will be well, inserting ‘not yet’ and ‘still’. Her actorial motivation † is to test Odysseus’ and Telemachus’ spirit (237–8); a unique variant of the *test motif (πειράτιζεν: 237). The narratorial motivation † is once more (cf. Introduction) to create *suspense through retardation: the Suitors will take courage from ‘Mentor’s’ empty promise (248–9) and the battle will continue (255–96) until Athena deals the decisive blow (297–8).

210 Odysseus focalizes (shifter: ‘thinking’) Athena specifically and aptly in this military situation as ‘urger of hosts’.

226–32 For the typical rebuke technique of contrasting positive ‘then’ with negative ‘now’, cf., e.g., II. 5.471–6.

239–40 For Athena’s comparison to/metamorphosis into a bird, cf. 1.319–24n. For gods watching a battle like/as birds, cf. II. 7.58–61. Athena’s – unique – choice of a swallow may be significant; cf. 21.411n.

241–96 Both parties are now armed and a regular battle takes place. The strictly symmetrical structure of this scene brings home the ineffectiveness of the Suitors versus the success of Odysseus’ party:

Suitors:
248–54 Parainesis by Agelaus.
255–9 They throw their spears, which all miss their targets and instead hit the walls and doors. They remain anonymous.

Fenik (1968: 49–52).
Odysseus and his men:

263–4  *Parainesis* by Odysseus.

265–71 They throw spears and all four hit their target. Both killers and killed are referred to by name (or function, ‘the swineherd’, etc.).

Suitors:

272–80 They throw their spears, some of which remain ineffective (273–6 = 256–9), while others lightly wound Telemachus and Eumaeus. Names of attackers and attacked are mentioned.

Odysseus and his men:

281–92a They throw their spears and all four hit their target. Both killers and killed are referred to by name (or function).

292b–296 Odysseus and Telemachus kill two more (named) Suitors from nearby.

In this scene the Suitors – more than anywhere else in the *Odyssey* – are given patronyms (cf. 241, 243, 287, 293), which seems another manifestation of the heroic patina overlying this Book; cf. Introduction.

241–6 A *catalogue is a recurrent element in battle-scenes; cf., e.g., II. 11.57–60; 13.790–2; and 17.216–18. As often, it marks the beginning of a battle (here, the battle with spears, after the bow-shooting). The information about the six men is contextually relevant: they are the best fighters and in the ensuing speech will be called upon by Agelaus to show their mettle (cf. 252). It also functions as a kind of ‘half-time score’: the narrator lists those of the best fighters among the Suitors who are ‘still’ alive (but soon will be killed). Most of those mentioned here also figure elsewhere in the story: Eurynomus (one of the sons of Aegyptius: 2.22; his death is not recorded); Amphimedon (wounds Telemachus in 277–8, but is killed by him in 284; he will play an important part in the second *nekuia*: 24.102–90); Demoptolemus (is killed in 266); Pisander (is one of the Suitors who gives Penelope gifts: 18.299; he is killed in 268); Polybus (is killed in 284).

248–54 *Agelaus’ parainesis* (cf. 69–78n.): urgent address (‘friends’) – situation (‘this man will soon stop, for Mentor has gone without helping them

---

12 Beye (1964: 369).

and they are left alone near the door') – call to action ('do not throw your spears all at the same time but let only these six men, i.e., the ones mentioned in 241–3, throw first and try to kill Odysseus. When he is dead, we need not worry about the others').

Agelaus’ perception of ‘Mentor’s’ disappearance from the battlefield (cf. 239–40) has not been recorded before in the form of embedded focalization; an instance of *emancipation of speech.

255 An instance of the *‘X acted as Y ordered’ motif.

256 Rendering the Suitors’ spears ineffective, Athena makes good her promise of help after all and contradicts Agelaus’ words in 249. For gods influencing the course of missiles, cf. *Il. 4.127–30 and – figuratively – 17.629–33.

260–4 Odysseus’ parainesis (cf. 69–78n.): urgent address (‘friends’) – call to action (‘now it is time for us to throw our spears at the Suitors, who are so eager to kill us’).

269 The expression ‘to bite the great earth with their teeth’ normally occurs in direct speech (*Il. 2.418; 11.749; 19.61–2; 22.17; 24.738). Its use here by the narrator may betray his engaged focalization; he is gloating over the demise of ‘the baddies’.

270–1 A comparison with 95–8 shows how much the scales have already tilted: the Suitors are now standing ‘with their backs against the wall’; and Odysseus and his men are able to regain their spears from the bodies of their victims.

286–91 Philoetius’ vaunt recalls Ctesippus’ assault on Odysseus in 20.287–300 and is typically ironic (cf. 194–9n.): ‘this [your death] is a guest-gift for you in exchange for the cow-foot, which you once gave Odysseus’; his irony † echoes the irony of Ctesippus, who called the cow-foot his guest-gift (20.296).

297–8 Athena now finally – cf. 236–40 – gives the coup de grace, displaying the aegis. The depictions on the aegis are aimed at inspiring courage but above all fear; cf. *Il. 5.738–42. Thus it is used both to encourage (*Il. 2.446–52) and to frighten warriors (*Il. 17.593–6). Here it breaks the last resistance of the Suitors, who panic and start fleeing through the megaron. The – unique – qualification of the aegis as ‘destroying men’ (φθισμὸς) anticipates the massacre its wielding is to cause (307–9).

299–308 This is the only instance of the successive simile technique in
the *Odyssey*: first, the Suitors, fleeing in panic, are compared to a stampeding herd of oxen maddened by a gadfly (299–301), next, Odysseus and his men are compared to vultures killing birds (302–8). The combination of similes marks this important moment, the killing of the majority of the Suitors. For the significance of the ‘oxen’ imagery, cf. 401–6n. The *‘bird’ imagery has been used throughout the *Odyssey* to anticipate Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors, and now it is employed effectively at the moment of their actual death. Two details are relevant for the context: (i) the birds ‘have no fighting spirit and see no way to escape’ (the inferiority of the Suitors is stressed) and (ii) ‘the men are pleased with the hunt’, presumably because they see the birds who devour their harvest killed. Homeric similes often have an observer (e.g., *Il.* 4.275–82, 452–6; or 8.555–61), who in some cases can be connected with one of the characters in the context. Here, the ‘pleased men’ may suggest the grim satisfaction of Odysseus and his men at their task, though this would entail comparing them to both the vultures and to the men; alternatively, it may suggest Athena’s joy, or, the intended reaction of the narratees, who are meant to condone the bloody revenge.

At the same time, the similes function as a summary †; the killing of the bulk of the Suitors is here dealt with economically in a mere ten lines. The narrator avoids a monotonous summing up of killings, and glosses over the problem of whether it is realistic to suppose that four men can kill some one hundred opponents.

310–80 The last phase of the battle consists of a series of three supplications: Leodes (310–29), Phemius (330–60 + 378–80), and Medon (361–80); an instance of a triadic structure †. ‘Supplication’ scenes are regularly found in the context of battle (cf., e.g., *Il.* 11.122–47; 20.463–72; or 21.64–119), but never in a row, as here. The effect of the juxtaposition † is to put into relief the sparing of the life of the singer Phemius, following as it does upon the non-sparing of the seer Leodes.

310–29 The structure of this first *supplication* scene is as follows: (i) approach (310a; only Leodes, Phemius, and Medon approach their supplicant ‘in a hurry’); (ii) gesture (310b); (iii) *supplication* speech (312–19); (iv) reaction of supplicant, which consists of a speech, in which the supplication is rejected (320–5) and an act (326–9: he kills Leodes). The detail of

---

Odysseus killing one Suitor with the sword of another – dead – Suitor is unique and may be taken as symbolic; this innocent Suitor (like *Amphinomus) is punished by association. Likewise, the manner of his death (Odysseus cuts off his head while he is speaking) is symbolic for this man, whose profession was to speak exegetical words.

311–25 *Leodes’ *supplication’ speech and Odysseus’ reaction display the reverse order †:

Leodes

A (reference to speech-act of supplicating) I supplicate you: (request) have mercy on me (312).

B (reasons why suppliant should accept the request) I have never done the women any harm.

(reacton to one of the points of Odysseus’ ‘indictment’; cf. 37).

Indeed, I have tried to stop the other Suitors. But they did not listen.

(he is backed up on this point by the narrator; cf. 21.144–8n.)

And because of their reckless behaviour they have (deservedly) met their death. But I, an innocent seer amongst them, will lie down undeservedly (313–19).

Odysseus

B’ If you claim to be a seer amongst them,

(‘catch-word’ technique †: his μετὰ τοίς θυσσάκοις echoes that of Leodes in 318) you will have prayed for me never to return and for yourself to have a wife and children (321–4).

A’ Therefore you could not escape death (325).

330–80 The last two supplications are – uniquely – combined, and the connection between the two underlined by the reference to the altar of Zeus at the beginning and end (334–5 and 379) and the *significant use of the dual to refer to Phemius and Medon in 378–80.

The structure is as follows:16

330–41 (prelude) Phemius decides in an *indirect deliberation’ scene, which takes the ‘whether’ form, to supplicate Odysseus rather than seek shelter at Zeus’s altar.

342 (i) He approaches the suppliant,

(ii) takes his knees,

343–53 (iii) and offers a 'supplication' speech, in which he invokes Telemachus as his witness.

354–60 Instead of a reaction of the supplicandus Odysseus, we find an intervention by Telemachus (triggered by Phemius' own words: 350); he proposes sparing Phemius and mentions the herald Medon in one breath.

361–4 Upon hearing this, Medon emerges from his hiding place,
365 (i) approaches the supplicandus Telemachus,
(ii) takes his knees,
366–70 (iii) and offers a 'supplication' speech.
371 (iv) instead of a reaction from the supplicandus Telemachus, we have Odysseus’ acceptance of Medon’s and Phemius’ supplications.
378–80 The two suppliants seek shelter at Zeus’s altar, as Odysseus has told them to do (cf. 375–6).

Phemius and Medon will re-enter the story in 23.143–5 and 24.439–49.

330–1 The narrator indicates that so far Phemius has managed to escape the massacre; cf. Medon in 363. In fact, it will soon (381–9) become clear that they are the last survivors of the Suitor-party. The information that Phemius sang for the Suitors ‘by compulsion’ is a strategically placed internal repeating analepsis † (cf. 1.154): soon the singer will stress this fact when begging Odysseus for his life.

344–53 The structure of Phemius’ *‘supplication’ speech is as follows: ‘(reference to speech-act of supplicating) I supplicate you: (request) have mercy on me. (reasons why supplicandus should accept the request) You will later regret having killed a singer, who sings for gods and mortals alike. I am self-taught and taught by a god. Singing for you, I seem to be singing for a god. Telemachus can testify that I only sang for the Suitors by compulsion (cf. 330–1n.), because I could not oppose them, who are more and stronger.’

347–8 Phemius explains his talents as a singer in terms of double motivation †: he is both self-taught and taught by a god (for teaching by a god, cf. Demodocus in 8.481 and 488).17 This ‘autodidacticism’, even more prominently than the Muse-invocations, camouflages a singer’s actual training by other singers; cf. 1.1–10n.

17 Lesky (1966: 30–2).
350–6 This is the second – and more dramatic – time that Telemachus backs Phemius; in 1.328–64 he defended the singer’s choice of song against Penelope.

357–8 This is the first time we hear about *Medon having taken care of Telemachus when he was young. The information is reserved for the most relevant moment; an instance of paralipsis †.

366–70 *Medon dissociates himself from the Suitors, recalling one of their *crimes and calling them ‘fools’, *νηπιοι.

371 Odysseus’ smile is both reassuring (cf. the opening of his ensuing speech: ‘have courage’) and a sign of his amusement at Medon’s unusual hiding place (under a chair, wrapped in an oxhide).

381–9 The end of the battle is marked by a simile. ‘Fish’ comparisons/similes in Homer are found in 10.124; 12.251–5; *Il.* 16.406–10; 21.22–6; 23.692–5; 24.80–2. The vehicle of the fish has two connotations: helplessness and unheroicness (it is not a proud and impressive animal, like a lion or boar). The primary function of the simile † is ‘advertised’: κέχυνται=κέχυντο, πάντες=πάντας; it illustrates how ‘all’ the Suitors ‘lie piled’ on top of each other. Only here do we hear of fishermen using a net, elsewhere fish are caught with a hook (4.369; 12.251–4) or a harpoon (10.124); the detail is appropriate in that the Suitors, hemmed into (the corners of) the *megaron*, are trapped in a kind of net. The longing of the fish for their natural element, the sea (387), adds pathos. The secondary function is to give expression to the way Odysseus focalizes his unheroic dead opponents.

390–473 The execution of the unfaithful maids is told in great detail, but then ‘the beggar’/Odysseus had been greatly annoyed by their sleeping with the Suitors (cf. 20.5–24):

391–2 Odysseus to Telemachus  Call Euryclea, so that I can say something to her.
(no indication yet of his plans to execute the unfaithful maids)

395–7 Telemachus to Euryclea  Stand up, you who are warden of the maids in the palace, and go. My father calls you and wants to say something to you.
(again no indication, though Euryclea’s unique
This is one in a series of ‘lion’ comparisons/similes, which are attributed to Odysseus; cf. 4.333–40n. Menelaus announced that Odysseus would one day return home and kill the Suitors like a lion, and this has now come true. The Suitors are cast in the role of an ox, which recalls their earlier being compared to a stampeding herd of oxen (299–301).

The primary function of the simile † is ‘advertised’: to visualize how Odysseus is ‘spattered all over’ (πεπαλαγμένον = πεπαλάκτο) with blood. Its secondary function is to suggest Euryclea’s focalization of Odysseus; cf. 23.45–8, where, describing to Penelope how she found Odysseus, she says that he was spattered with blood ‘like a lion’. At one point, however, there is a contrast between simile and context: the sight of the blood-spattered lion is frightening (405), whereas Euryclea rejoices when she sees the dead Suitors (cf. Odysseus’ remark in 411: ‘rejoice inside’ and Euryclea’s report to Penelope in 23.47: ‘seeing him you would rejoice’). Such contrasts are not unusual; cf., e.g., II. 4.275–84 (the shepherd of the simile ‘shudders’, while Agamemnon in the context ‘rejoices’) or 8.555–61 (the shepherd in the simile ‘rejoices’, while Nestor in the context, 9.77, says: ‘who would rejoice? i.e., no one rejoices’).

Euryclea intends to shout out a triumphant cry of thanks, but is restrained by Odysseus; this is no heroic battle but a – divinely ordained – punishment. *Odysseus now behaves very differently than ten years ago,
when in very similar circumstances (after the punishment of an opponent, the Cyclops, who had perverted the rites of hospitality) he had exulted at his victory. It may be that his experiences since then, not least the way his vaunt over the Cyclops backfired, have taught him caution.\(^\text{18}\)

For Odysseus’ claim that the Suitors’ death is ‘the fate of the gods’, cf. 35–41n. He – unwittingly – repeats Zeus’s ideas in 1.32–43: the Suitors have themselves incurred their ‘shameful fate’ because of their ‘evil deeds’ and ‘reckless behaviour’ (*ἀτασθαλ*).\(^414–15\) Odysseus concentrates on one *crime of the Suitors (their dishonouring of guests) by way of transition to his next point (Euryclea must tell him the names of the maids who dishonoured him).\(^417–34\) Earlier Odysseus refused an offer by Euryclea to be informed about the unfaithful maids; cf. 16.304–20n.\(^426–7\) One more time, the *‘Telemachus coming of age’ motif is invoked. Here Euryclea uses it to explain to Odysseus why the youth had not checked the maids.\(^428–31\) An instance of the *‘rejected suggestion’ device: Euryclea suggests what in the situation would be a logical course of events (to wake up Penelope and report what has happened), only to hear it rejected by Odysseus. The narratees are reminded that the reunion between Odysseus and Penelope is still on the narrator’s agenda, yet see it immediately postponed; cf. also 480–501n.\(^433–47\) Odysseus’ instructions to Telemachus and the two servants are given while Euryclea is calling the maids (she sets out in 433–4, returns in 446–7). The ‘fill-in’ technique \(^\dagger\) is used to great effect, in that the narratees – but not Euryclea or the maids themselves – are informed about the impending execution of the maids after the cleaning, and will therefore look at the act of cleaning with different eyes.\(^444–5\) As in the case of the Suitors (cf. 35–41), Odysseus first indicates what the maids have done wrong before executing them.\(^448–73\) Odysseus’ orders are executed, sometimes in a slightly different form:

\(^{18}\) Eisenberger (1973: 300–1) and Rutherford (1986).
Maids carried bodies outside, ‘by compulsion’ and supervised by Odysseus.

They cleaned the furniture.

Telemachus and herdsmen scraped the floor.

When the whole megaron had been cleaned, they led the maids outside, and penned them in.

Telemachus announces that they will not die ‘with a clean death’, because they have insulted him and his mother, by sleeping with the Suitors.

He hangs the maids.

**Execution** | **Order**
---|---
448–51 | Cf. 437
452–3 | ≈ 438–9
454–6 | –
457–9 | ≈ 440–2
460 | –
461–4 | contrast 443a
465–73 | cf. 443b–445

---

472 Telemachus’ focalization (shifter: ἅπτως + optative) triggers character-language †: ὀδὸκτιστο, ‘most wretched manner’, occurs here in embedded focalization, elsewhere in speech (six times).

468–72 The primary function of this simile † is to illustrate how the maids have the ropes around their necks, like birds who are caught in a snare-net. The simile can be related to the all-pervasive *bird-imagery, which accompanies Odysseus’ revenge; cf. in particular the two omens which feature pigeons overpowered by birds of prey (15.525–8; 20.242–3). Cf. also the simile of the fish caught in a net, used just before of the dead Suitors (383–9). The detail that ‘the birds longed for their nest, but it was in fact a horrible (*στυγερός) bed which received them’ adds pathos (cf. 387).

474–7 In 167–9 Eumaeus suggested that Melanthius should be killed for the transgressions he had committed. At that stage Odysseus had merely suggested binding him and leaving him alive, to make him suffer as long as possible. Now Telemachus and the two herdsmen apparently think the time has come to kill him, and they perform the cruel treatment with which Antinous had earlier threatened Irus and ‘the beggar’/Odysseus; cf. 18.82–7n.

480–501 Odysseus himself puts the finishing touch on the cleaning of the palace by fumigating it with sulphur. The scene also forms the transition to the reunion with Penelope:
Odysseus to Euryclea (A) Bring fire and sulphur, and call (B) Penelope and (C) the maids (480–4).

Euryclea to Odysseus (A’–C’) Your orders are right, but (D) let me bring you clothes, so you can put off these rags (485–9).

Odysseus to Euryclea (A’’) Bring me the fire first (490–1).

(an instance of the *rejected suggestion* device, which alerts the narratees to the fact that Odysseus will still be in disguise when he meets Penelope, an important factor in their protracted reunion; cf. 23.95n.)

narrator execution of A (492–4), C (495–501), and B (23.1–80).

(the order of execution is such that the Penelope element comes last and can be told in the greatest detail)
This book recounts the final part of the fortieth day, its – miraculously prolonged – night, and the beginning of the forty-first day (cf. Appendix A); it brings the long-delayed reunion of Odysseus and Penelope, but also prepares for the final scenes of the *Odyssey* (the confrontation with the families of the slain Suitors: 117–52, 362–3; and Odysseus’ reunion with Laertes: 359–60).

The reunion consists of the following parts: recognition of Odysseus by Penelope (1–246), which is interrupted by a scene in which the departure of Odysseus and his companions for the country is announced (117–65); the couple’s first conversation, which discusses the future (247–87); their love-making (288–99); their second conversation, which centres on the past (300–42a); and sleep (342b–348). It is followed by the departure of Odysseus and his companions (349–72).

The theme of the reunion of husband and wife is underscored by the narrator through his use of periphrastic denomination †: more than in any other book, Odysseus is referred to as πόσις (2, 86, 181, 239), Penelope as ἔλοξη (165, 182, 232, 247, 346, 349).¹

¹–296 The last instance of the *Penelope leaves her room’ scenes is so much expanded that the typical structure gradually disappears from view: (i) indication of why she leaves her room (1–84; expanded into an exchange with Euryclea); (ii) she descends to the megaron (85–7); (iii) sits down (88–92); but (iv), initially, does not speak (93–5); after a while a conversation does ensue; which ends with her (vii) retiring to her bedroom with Odysseus (288–96).

The concluding elements of the "delayed recognition" story-pattern in the case of Odysseus' recognition by Penelope are modified, elaborated, repeated, reversed, and postponed, to form the most extended and complex *anagnorisis* of the *Odyssey*:²

First movement (Penelope and Euryclea)

4–9  Eur.  Odysseus has come back and killed the Suitors.  disclosure by a third person
10–24  Pen.  You must have lost your mind.  scepticism
25–32  Eur.  It was the stranger. Telemachus knew about his incognito presence but held his tongue.  first piece of evidence
32–8  Pen.  How could Odysseus, alone, kill all the Suitors?  scepticism
39–57  Eur.  I don’t know, but I have seen that they are dead.  second piece of evidence
58–68  Pen.  A god must have performed this feat; Odysseus is dead.  scepticism
69–79  Eur.  I recognized him by his scar.  third piece of evidence (including token)
80–4  Pen.  I will go down to see the man who killed the Suitors.  scepticism

Second movement (Telemachus, Odysseus and Penelope)

85–95  nar.  Odysseus and Penelope sit silently opposite each other.  non-disclosure and non-recognition
96–103  Tel.  Mother, why don’t you embrace father?  disclosure by a third person
104–10  Pen.  If he really is Odysseus, we will recognize each other by our own tokens.  scepticism (announcement of) tokens
111–16  Od.  Penelope is testing me, but soon will recognize me  test (announcement of) recognition

117–65a  Interruption (Odysseus is bathed and beautified)

Third movement (Odysseus and Penelope)

165b–172  Od.  Why don’t you recognize me?  disclosure
173–81  Pen.  Euryclea, make up his bed outside the bedroom  test
181–206  Od.  But the bed cannot be moved.  tokens

I know this, because I made it myself.

---

The narratorial motivation † of the many postponements of the final reunion is clear; the actorial motivation † in the case of Penelope has been amply prepared for in her distrust, and is explicitly worked out when she explains her reservations in 209–30; in the case of Odysseus it remains vague (he wants her to recognize him first: 91–2, just as he wants his father to recognize him: 24.216–18).

1–84 This scene brings the fulfilment of Odysseus’ order to Euryclea in 22.482–3 (‘ask Penelope to come here’). As focalized by Euryclea, that order becomes ‘to tell her mistress that her beloved husband is inside the palace’ (2); note the periphrastic denominations †. Hence, it becomes a step in the prolonged recognition, Euryclea trying vainly to convince Penelope that Odysseus has come back.

The conversation has no formalized structure, but forms a close-knit unity because of the many verbal repetitions:

**Euryclea**

Wake up, Penelope, in order that you may see with your own eyes, what you have been wishing for all the time. Odysseus has come back and reached home and killed the Suitors, who ate his goods and threatened his son.

**Penelope**

Dear nurse, the gods have taken away your good sense, who can make a stupid person sensible and the loose-minded discreet. Why do you mock me and wake me up from my sweet sleep, the best I had since Odysseus went to Troy? But go down. If it had been another servant who woke me up and told me this, I would have harshly sent her away.

**Euryclea**

I do not mock you (‘catch-word’ technique †: λοβεύω picks up λοβεύει, but Odysseus truly has come back and reached home, as I say. It is the stranger, whom all treated dishonourably. Telemachus must long have known that he was back, but discreetly kept his father’s plans a secret in order to take revenge on the Suitors.

**Penelope**

Come, dear nurse, tell me unfailingly, if truly he has reached home, as you say, how he killed the Suitors.

**Euryclea**

I did not see it, but only heard the groaning of those killed. But
afterwards I saw Odysseus and the bodies. But follow me, in order that you both may become happy again, after all you have gone through. Now your wish has been fulfilled: he has come back and found you and your son. He has taken his revenge on the Suitors, who treated him badly.

Penelope  Dear nurse, don’t exult yet. You know, how glad I and my son would be at his return. This story is not true, as you tell it, but one of the gods has killed the Suitors, angry at them because of their dishonourable treatment of guests. Odysseus has lost his return and is dead.

Euryclea  Dear child, what do you say, who said of your husband who is inside near the hearth that he would never come back. But I’ll give you another token: I have seen his scar, but he did not allow me to tell you. But follow me. If I deceive you, kill me in the most horrible way.

Penelope  Dear nurse, even though you are clever, you cannot see through the gods’ plans. But, all right, let us go to my son, in order that I may see the dead Suitors and the one who killed them.

5  For Penelope’s – functional – sleep during the slaughter of the Suitors, cf. 21.350–8n.

8–9  Euryclea rehearses two of the Suitors’ long list of *crimes: devouring Odysseus’ goods and threatening the life of his son.

11–14  An instance of the ‘you used to be sensible, but now you have lost your mind’ motif; cf. 4.31–2n.

16–19  Athena many times sheds ‘sweet’ sleep over Penelope (cf. 1.362–4n.); this is the only time Penelope herself acknowledges the sweetness of her sleep. When she adds that she has never slept like that since Odysseus left for Troy, the narratees may note the dramatic irony †; they know better than sceptical Penelope what a truly special sleep this has been, during which the Suitors were killed.

21–4  For the ‘if someone else . . .’ motif, cf. II. 2.80.

29–31  Euryclea only now realizes (note ἐρα) that Telemachus must have known about Odysseus’ return already for a long time. Her stress on Telemachus’ discretion (σαφροσύλλησι: 30) caps the boy’s own claim that he is not ‘loose-minded’ (χαλιφροσύλλη: 16.310).

The *crime of the Suitors here recalled is their ‘violence’, which refers to their dishonouring, indeed physically abusing ‘the stranger’.
Penelope reacts with joy and scepticism. The same combination is found in Odysseus’ recognition of Ithaca (when he is glad, 13.250–2, but asks for confirmation all the same, 324–8), and Penelope’s recognition of Odysseus in ‘the stranger’s’ tale (when she cries tears of nostalgic emotion, 19.204–9, but comes with a request for confirmation all the same, 215–19).

This type of sceptical εἴ + indicative (+ modifiers like ἐπείσω) clause often recurs in recognition scenes; cf. 13.328; 19.216; 22.45; 23.107–8; and 24.328.

Though for Odysseus and Telemachus the *‘one against many’ motif now belongs to the past, for Penelope it is still a matter of concern, which prevents her from believing Euryclea’s news right away.

Euryclea offers as evidence a mirror-story †, which takes the form of an internal repeating analepsis:

I did not see the actual killing, since we sat in the women’s quarters
and only heard the groaning of men killed (40–2).
Then Telemachus came to call me (43–4).
I found Odysseus standing amidst the bodies (45–6a),
which were heaped on top of each other (46b–47a).
You would enjoy the sight of him (47b)
spattered with blood like a lion (48).
Now the bodies lie in the courtyard (49–50a)
and Odysseus is fumigating the palace. He sent me to call you (50b–51).

For the rhetorical device of turning one’s addressee into a potential focalizer (‘you would X, seeing Y’), cf. 20.233–4; II. 4.353–5; 8.470–2; 9.359–61. 4

Euryclea’s ‘Odysseus is fumigating’ forms a minor breach of the ‘continuity of time’ principle †, since the aorist dieýe¤vesen in 22.494 suggested that Odysseus has finished fumigating by the time Euryclea set out to call Penelope in 22.495–6.

Euryclea’s switch to the second-person plural/dual is rhetorically effective: she tries to break Penelope’s resistance by anticipating her joyful

---

reunion with Odysseus. The stress on their both having suffered many ills also sets the tone of the reunion, in which it will be made clear that Penelope’s hardships match those of Odysseus.

62–8 For Odysseus’ return as a kind of theoxeny, cf. 13.335–8n.; for Penelope’s conviction that the Suitors have been punished by the gods, cf. 22.35–41n.

The *crime of the Suitors mentioned here by Penelope is their dishonouring of guests.

74–7 Euryclea again (cf. 40–51) offers a mirror-story †, in the form of an internal repeating analepsis:

When I was washing him, I noticed his scar. Cf. 19.392–3
I wanted to tell you about it, Cf. 19.476–7
but he, putting his hands on my mouth, Cf. 19.479–80
did not allow me in his shrewd mind. Cf. 19.481–90

When we compare the two versions, we may note that Euryclea (i) obviously does not include Athena’s intervention (19.478–9a), which she had not noticed; (ii) in retrospect, appreciates Odysseus’ act of silencing her as a proof of his ‘shrewdness’ (πολυκερδείησθαι νόος: 77), while at the time she was offended by it (19.492–4).

78–9 For this type of utterance (‘you may kill me, if I lie’), cf. ‘the stranger’/Odysseus in 14.393–400.

80–4 Penelope does not react at all to Euryclea’s trump card, the *‘token’ of the scar; her lack of response will become understandable in 108–10, where she reveals that she and Odysseus have their own, secret ‘tokens’. At this stage it increases the tension of the narratees: when and how will Penelope be convinced?

Penelope’s sudden mention of Telemachus (i) resembles 18.166, where she likewise motivates a descent to the megaron by means of her son, and (ii) prepares for his role in the ensuing scene.

85–95 This scene of pregnant silence displays a highly refined use of focalization:

focalizer

85 narrator Penelope came down, hesitating (shifter),
86–7 Penelope whether to question her husband or kiss him.
An *‘indirect deliberation’* scene, which takes the ‘whether’ form. It does not lead to a decision, but serves to describe Penelope’s state of mind; cf. 4.787–90n. As in the preceding scene with Euryclea, reason and emotion alternate rapidly. It is revealing to see that Penelope is less composed in thought than in word; she considers the possibility of kissing Odysseus straightaway. The use of ‘dear husband’ (86) need not imply that she has recognized Odysseus; rather it should be understood as ‘the man whom Euryclea says is my dear husband’ (cf. 71). One could compare πατρός (Odysseus) in 4.118, where Menelaus is still only guessing whether the youth before him is Odysseus’ son Telemachus.

Penelope sat herself down opposite Odysseus, who was sitting against a pillar with his eyes cast down, *awaiting* (shifter), whether (as he hoped but could not control) his wife would speak.

Penelope was struck with amazement and now *looked at* (shifter) Odysseus straight, then failed to recognize him, who was wearing shabby clothing.

85–7 An *‘indirect deliberation’* scene, which takes the ‘whether’ form. It does not lead to a decision, but serves to describe Penelope’s state of mind; cf. 4.787–90n. As in the preceding scene with Euryclea, reason and emotion alternate rapidly. It is revealing to see that Penelope is less composed in thought than in word; she considers the possibility of kissing Odysseus straightaway. The use of ‘dear husband’ (86) need not imply that she has recognized Odysseus; rather it should be understood as ‘the man whom Euryclea says is my dear husband’ (cf. 71). One could compare πατρός (= Odysseus) in 4.118, where Menelaus is still only guessing whether the youth before him is Odysseus’ son Telemachus.

Penelope sets herself opposite Odysseus, a *seating arrangement* which suggests that an intimate conversation will follow, but the addition ‘by the opposite wall’ (cf. Achilles in *Il.* 9.218–19 and 24.596–8) suggests a certain formality and distance; cf. Telemachus’ angry comment in 98–9.

95 In 22.485–91 the narratees were emphatically reminded that Odysseus is still in disguise; this information now becomes relevant, in that his shabby clothing prevents Penelope from recognizing him.

Telemachus breaks the silence and verbalizes his angry focalization of the situation: Penelope seats herself away from Odysseus, not near him (98–9a; note the deictic οὗτος) and does not question him (99b). He dismisses her behaviour as heartless (ring-composition †: ‘you have a harsh heart’ ≈ ‘your heart is harder than stone’), an interpretation which the narratees, who know from 86–7 how close she has come to doing what Telemachus here suggests, may see as unjustified. One last time the tension between Telemachus and Penelope, which characterizes their relationship throughout the *Odyssey* (cf. 1.345–59n.), comes to the surface. It is instrumental, in that it provides both a foil to Odysseus’ first

understanding reaction (111–16) and an anticipation of his second angry reaction (166–72).

100–3 Telemachus’ qualification (‘No other woman would . . . But you . . .’) resembles Athena’s comment on Odysseus’ caution in 13.333–4 (‘Another man would . . . But you . . .’). No wonder that Odysseus will show a greater appreciation of Penelope’s behaviour, which so much resembles his own.

101–2 Telemachus uses the typical formulation which Odysseus employs when revealing himself; cf. 16.205–6n.

103 The typical ‘always’ of quarrels; cf. 17.388n.

105–16 The presence of Telemachus allows man and wife to hold an indirect dialogue †: both address their son, but in fact aim their words at each other. Thus Penelope brings up the secret ‘tokens’ between herself and Odysseus (108–10), and Odysseus accepts this test (113–14). The ‘catch-word’ technique † (Odysseus’ καὶ ἀρετήν, ‘even better’ in 114 picks up Penelope’s καὶ λόγον, ‘even better’ in 109) underscores the fact that, though addressing Telemachus, Odysseus is in fact answering Penelope.

105–10 Defending her behaviour, Penelope reveals to Telemachus what the narratees already know: she is struck with amazement (cf. 93b) and cannot talk to Odysseus (cf. 93a) or look at him directly (cf. 94).

107–8 For the sceptical εἰ-clause, cf. 36n.

110 For the ‘tokens’ of Penelope and Odysseus, cf. 166–230n. They also are a secret to the narratees; the dénouement with the bed will come as a surprise.

111–16 As in 18.281–3, Odysseus is able to read Penelope’s mind (he rightly guesses that she does not recognize him because of his dirty appearance and shabby clothing; cf. 95) and therefore can smile at her behaviour, which so annoys Telemachus. His words suggest that once he has washed and shed his disguise, Penelope will recognize him. This is an instance of misdirection †: circumspect Penelope will demand further proof; cf. 166–230n.

117–65 An instance of the ‘interruption’ technique †: the conversation between Odysseus and Penelope is interrupted at a point when Penelope has not yet recognized Odysseus (although Odysseus announces that she will do so ‘soon’) – Odysseus starts to discuss with Telemachus the question of how to deal with the families of the dead Suitors – and then, in 164, the
conversa- tion between man and wife is resumed and the recognition finally comes about.

The scene with Odysseus and Telemachus is a retardation † in the extra-ordinarily protracted recognition (cf. 1–240n.) and yet linked to the main action, in that (i) Odysseus finally takes off his shabby clothing, which so far had kept Penelope from recognizing him, (ii) Telemachus is gently removed, so as to allow the spouses to employ their secret tokens, and (iii) the marriage song is started, which will accompany the resumed conversation between husband and wife (see below).

The structure of the scene is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Odysseus</th>
<th>Let us consider how to deal with the ‘helpers’ of the Suitors (117–22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ring-composition †: φραζωμεθ’ . . . φραζεσθαι)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemachus</td>
<td>You must come up with a plan; we will help you (123–8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odysseus</td>
<td>(A) We will stage a hoax marriage ceremony, to gain time before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(B) we go to the country, where we will deliberate further (129–40).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a *‘table of contents’ speech: the narratees are given a hint how the story will evolve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrator</td>
<td>Execution of A (141–65); B will follow in 366–72.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Odysseus the ‘marriage ceremony’ is a trick (actorial motivation †); the narratorial motivation is to express irony † (the Suitors have been aspiring for marriage all through the story, but have instead found death) and symbolism (the singing and dancing will continue until 297–9 and therefore accompanies the resumed consummation of their marriage by Odysseus and Penelope; for another significant accompanying song, cf. 1.325–7n.).

118–22 Odysseus started worrying about the aftermath of the killing in 20.41–3. He now uses an a fortiori argument to sketch the seriousness of their situation: many a man who has killed one man without many helpers has had to flee, whereas we have killed the flower of the nation (i.e., many men with many helpers).

---

6 Armstrong (1958).
For the ‘exile after homicide’ motif, cf. 13.258–71n.

An instance of the ‘no other could vie with X in . . .’ motif.

Judging by Telemachus’ use of ‘we’ (and cf. Odysseus’ ‘you’ in 131–2, and the narrator’s ‘they’ in 141–2), the narratees may assume that Philoetius and Eumaeus are present, too; cf. 22.478–9, where it was said that they (Telemachus, Philoetius, and Eumaeus) went to Odysseus.

The epithet πολυδένδρεως, ‘with many trees’ (again in 359) functions as a seed †: trees will play an important role in the meeting between Odysseus and his father.

Odysseus’ orders are executed in parallel order †. The narrator’s version is fuller (twelve lines versus six) and also contains an unannounced extension at the end:

**narrator**

142–3a Telemachus and the two herdsmen wash themselves and put on clean clothes.

143b–145 The singer plays the lyre and makes them dance.

146–7 The palace resounds with dancing.

148–52 Wayfarers conclude that Penelope has remarried.

153–65 Odysseus is washed, given clean clothes, beautified, and returns to Penelope.

A highly abbreviated *‘bathing’ type-scene. After cleaning their hands and feet in 22.478, Telemachus and the servants now bathe and change clothes by way of preparation for the dance.

The last time we saw Phemius, he was sitting near Zeus’s altar as a suppliant. His return to the palace has been passed over; an instance of ellipsis †.

The fulfilment of Odysseus’ expectation that wayfarers will hear the dancing and conclude that a marriage is going on (135–6) takes the form of an *actual tis*-speech: they think that Penelope’s remarriage is taking place and have no idea that Odysseus has returned, let alone that the Suitors have been killed by him. A *narratorial intervention, in the form of a comment (the ‘they said A, but did not know how things really were’ motif; cf. 22.31–3n.), explicitly notes their ignorance. The situation resembles that in 4.769–72, where the Suitors misinterpret a prayer (for protection of Telemachus) by Penelope as a preparation for her remarriage.
The collective comment adds another perspective on Penelope’s remarriage: the Ithacans think that she should remain loyal to Odysseus and not remarry.

153–65 The definitive shedding of Odysseus’ disguise does not take the form of a change back, such as we found in 16.172–6, but is rather a combination of a ‘bathing’ type-scene and a ‘beautification’ scene:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>bathing</th>
<th>beautification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>153–4a</td>
<td>(ii) washing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154b</td>
<td>(iii) anointing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>(iv) clothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156–62</td>
<td></td>
<td>≈ 6.229–35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163a</td>
<td>(v) stepping out of the bathtub</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163b</td>
<td>resembling the gods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164–5</td>
<td>(vi) sitting down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in Book 6, the bathing, beautification, and simile may be said to have a symbolic meaning, signalling the return to civilization of ‘the lion’ Odysseus (cf. 6.130–6 and 22.401–6).7 The fact that Odysseus is washed by Penelope’s servant Eurynome rather than by Euryclea suggests a further step in the gradual process of Penelope accepting ‘the beggar’ to be Odysseus.

159–62 Similes are seldom repeated in the Homeric epics;8 the only Odyssean instances are found here (= 6.232–5) and 17.126–31 (= 4.335–40). In the latter case the repetition is only logical, in that the simile forms part of Telemachus’ report to his mother. Here the narratees may recall the effect Athena’s beautification of Odysseus had on Nausicaa (who from that point onwards starts thinking of Odysseus as a potential husband), and note all the more sharply the caution of Penelope, who does not let herself be taken in by Odysseus’ sudden glamorous appearance. The repetition may also have a structural function, marking the first and last phase of Odysseus’ restoration as Trojan hero, king, and husband.9

164–5 The *‘he sat down on the seat from which he had risen’ motif signals the stalemate between man and wife: despite his bath and the shedding of his disguise, Penelope still does not react and for Odysseus there is nothing for it but to resume his position opposite ‘his wife’ (the periphrastic denomination † may be expressive of his frustration at this stage).

166–230 The *‘token of recognition’, *sema (here, as in 19.185–257, employed in the context of a *test; cf. πειρωμένη in 181), in the case of Odysseus and Penelope takes the form of their marital bed; it thus symbolizes their loyalty despite twenty years of separation. Having washed and put on beautiful clothes, Odysseus had clearly expected to be recognized (cf. 115–16) and, when nothing happens, the patience which he still displayed in 113–14 comes to an end. He now shares Telemachus’ focalization of Penelope as unfeeling (166–70, 172; cf. 97, 100–3) and asks Euryclea to make up his bed (171–2). In her reaction (173–80) Penelope admits that she recognizes him, but still does not acknowledge him. Rather, she picks up his suggestion to let Euryclea make up his bed, of which she – as the narrator reveals only afterwards, by way of test – says that it is ‘outside the bedroom, which he made himself’. The ever restrained *Odysseus now for once loses his temper (181–204), apparently having forgotten their earlier announcement of tokens (cf. 107–14): someone must have moved the bed outside the bedroom, whereas he had constructed it in such a way as to be immobile. This immobility is its special characteristic (*sema: 188, 202). For Penelope his knowledge of the immobility of the bed (which, because he made the bedroom first, was known only to him and her and one servant: 225–9), is the secret ‘tokens’ (*semata: 206, 225) of which she had spoken before (110).

174–6 In her reply Penelope mirrors the structure of Odysseus’ speech in 166–72, which shows how at this stage she is cool-headedly directing events:

**Odysseus**

δαμωνιη, reproach

αλλονι, &gamma;Ευρυκλεα, make me my bed.

**Penelope**

δαμωνι’, defence

αλλονι &gamma;Ευρυκλεα, make him his bed outside the bedroom.

Defending her behaviour, Penelope reacts both to the speech Odysseus has just uttered and to his earlier one (113–16): she does not feel superior to him or dishonour him (cf. 116: ‘she dishonours me’) nor does she greatly admire him (as he apparently had expected after his bath), because she knows how
he looked when he left for Troy (and he now looks like that again). For the
time being she only states what is not the case; in 209–24 she will explain
what is the case.

175–6 An instance of the *‘Odysseus departs’ motif: Penelope recalls
how Odysseus looked when he departed.

183–204 Odysseus’ angry speech displays a multiple ring-composition †:

*(preamble)* You utter painful words (183).
A  *Who moved* the bed *elsewhere*? A difficult, for mortals well-nigh
impossible task (184–8a),
B  because the bed has a major *special characteristic* (188b–189):
C  description of the bed and bedroom (190–201)
B’  This is the *special characteristic* which I reveal to you (202a).
A’  I do not know whether the bed is still in place or whether *someone
moved it elsewhere* (202b–204).

184–8 In order to stress the difficulty of moving the bed, Odysseus uses
two instances of the *‘(not) even † hyperbole’ motif: ‘it would be difficult,
even for an expert, unless a god easily moved it. Of mortals, no one, *not even* a
very youthfully powerful one, could easily move it’.

186 For the ‘ease’ of divine action, cf. 3.231n.

190–201 The description † of the bed and bedroom is dynamic:
Odysseus narrates, in an external completing analepsis †, how he built them.
It is typical of the Homeric style to describe an object only at the point where
it is relevant to the story. Here this custom is exploited even more effectively,
in that the description is offered by a character (instead of the narrator) and is
new to the narratees, as well; an instance of *emancipation of speech.*

209–40 The typical element of the final reunion (cf. 16.4–219n.) is
doubled (first Penelope: 207–8, then Odysseus: 231–2), expanded with a
simile (233–40), and tailored to the occasion (apart from the customary tears
and kisses, we have Penelope – finally – getting close to Odysseus and the
couple embracing, from 207–8, through 232, until 240).

209–30 Like Euryclea in 19.474–5, Penelope feels the need to explain
why she did not recognize Odysseus immediately.† In her case, an expla-
nation is even more called for, because her son and husband have just

---

taken her severely to task for her hesitation. The structure of her speech is as follows:

Preamble (*captatio benevolentiae*)

A  
*Do not be angry at me, since you have been most sensible at other occasions, too* (209–10a).

B  
*(It is not my fault, but) The gods gave us this misery, jealously begrudging us a happy youth together* (210b–212).

A’  
*But do not be angry at me, because I did not lovingly embrace you the moment I saw you* (213–14),

Defence

C  
*For always I was afraid to be beguiled by some stranger* (215–17),

D  
*(example) like Helen* (218–24).

C’  
*But now, since you have recounted the tokens, you persuaded me* (225–30).

Once again (cf. 11.409–56n.), Helen is used as a parallel for Penelope, this time explicitly and by Penelope herself.11 Helen would not have succumbed to her desire for a stranger (Paris), if she had known that the Greeks would bring her back home again. A god made her do it and she did not realize that it had been a delusion until afterwards. When we relate this to Penelope herself, she seems to be saying that she had waited so long before embracing Odysseus, because she feared that the gods made her succumb to her erotic desire for ‘the stranger’ (pretending to be Odysseus), a delusion which she would come to regret, when the real Odysseus came home.

For Penelope’s distrust of her own emotions, cf. Telemachus, who in 16.194–200 feared being fooled by a god, who, by changing the old beggar into a divine-looking man, wanted him to believe that the man was his father (only to make him weep more, when he finds out he is not his father). For persons telling lies for profit, cf. 14.124–32.

211–12  For another female claim that the jealousy of the gods spoils relationships, cf. 5.118–29.

218–24  Like most Homeric characters (and Helen herself), Penelope excuses *Helen, by assuming that the gods made her commit her ‘unseemly

---

deed’, but, like other ‘victims’, she also stresses the sorrow which Helen caused others.

228–9 The character Actoris is introduced in the form of a chunk of explicit actorial characterization †; a parallel is *Dolius, another servant who was given to Penelope by her father at her marriage. Whereas Dolius plays a role in the story, we do not hear of Actoris again. The reason seems to be that she is no longer alive (‘she used to guard the door’ versus Dolius ‘who keeps the garden’). Her death ensures that now only Odysseus and Penelope know about the secret signs.

232 θυμαρης, ‘suited to one’s heart’, belongs to the character-language †: once in direct speech, twice in (implicit) embedded focalization (here and 17.199).

233–40 The primary function of this highly complex simile †12 is ‘advertised’: to illustrate Penelope’s joy (Δστασιος: 233 ≈ Δσταστος: 239) at finally having her husband back; holding him tightly in her arms, she feels she is on firm ground again. In the second place it is an instance of a ‘role reversal’ simile (cf. 5.392–9n.): Penelope is cast in the role of men, specifically shipwrecked sailors, whose experiences closely resemble those of Odysseus (especially in Book 5); their ship is wrecked by Poseidon, they have to swim to the coast, and their bodies are encrusted with brine. The effect of the role reversal is enhanced by the subtle structure of simile and context: since Odysseus was the subject of the sentence preceding the simile, it is only natural to associate the activities of the simile with him, the more so since they are perfectly suited to his person. Only afterwards does the narrator indicate that it is Penelope whom we should associate with the sailors. All in all, the effect is a merging of the experiences of man and wife (note the periphrastic denomination † in 232 and 239): Penelope’s years on Ithaca, tearfully waiting for Odysseus and holding out against the abrasive Suitors, have been as much an ordeal as Odysseus’ physical hardships during his years abroad (cf. Odysseus’ summing up in 350–3: ‘we have both had our full share of trials’).

The simile recalls that in 5.394–9, which describes Odysseus’ joy (Δσπαστος) at seeing land again in terms of the joy of children at seeing their father who has recovered from an illness. There the narrative context was

that of a shipwreck, while the simile described family life; here the relation
is exactly reversed.13

241–6 A similar ‘if not’-situation † also marked the end of the emotional
reunion with Telemachus (16.220–1) and the two herdsmen (21.226–7),
and cf. II. 23.154–5 and 24.713–5. Here the device is varied: instead of ‘they
would have wept till sunset, if X had not said . . .’, we have ‘they would have
wept till dawn, if Athena had not *thought of something else’, viz. to detain
dawn. Not until 344–8 will the goddess allow the sun to rise. In that passage
her motive becomes clear: she wants to give Odysseus time to make love and
to sleep. For another instance of divine meddling with sunset/sunrise, cf. II.
18.239–42.

247–87 Odysseus having passed the test, it now seems time to go to bed.
The moment is deferred, however, by Penelope, who, one last time, shows
her capacity to control her desire:

| Odysseus | A | Wife, we have not come to the end of our trials yet. For thus Tiresias
| Penelope | B | prophesied to me, when I descended into the Underworld (248–53).
| Penelope | B’ | But let us go to bed (254–5).
| Odysseus | A’ | You will go to bed later on (257–9),
| Odysseus | A’ | but tell me now about this trial, since I will get to know it sooner or
| Penelope | A’ | later (260–2).

(emotional preamble) Strange woman, why do you want to hear this? I
will tell you, but you won’t be pleased (263–5a).

A’’ Tiresias prophesied that I would have to voyage again and that I would
die in old age (265b–284).

Penelope (emotional coda) If the gods grant you a better old age (i.e., better than
the prime of your life; cf. 211–12), (‘catch-word’ technique †: γήρος
picks up γήρας in 283)
then there is hope that finally you will be free from misery (285–7).

251–3 A brief mirror-story †, in the form of a repeating analepsis, of the
meeting with Tiresias (11.90–151); cf. the verbal echo νόστον . . . διζημενος
≈ νόστον διζησι (11.100). A full report of the prophecy will follow in
267–84.

264–7 For emotional preambles to storytelling, which often take the
form of a reluctance to narrate, cf. 3.103–17n.

267–84 Odysseus could have quoted Tiresias’ words in 11.121–37 in
direct speech (as does Telemachus with Menelaus’ words in 17.124–46).
Instead, he turns to indirect speech, which allows him to emphasize that the
seer’s words were a command (cf. ἔνδογεν: 267 and ἐκέλευσεν: 276; ἐπιτευ: 273 and φάτο: 284 correspond to the seer’s own emphatic ‘I tell you’).14 Even
so, his report is almost verbatim, except for the necessary changes when the
‘I’ of Book 11 (Tiresias) becomes ‘he’ and the ‘you’ (Odysseus) becomes ‘I’.
Two minor changes are: (i) the addition of ‘(he incited me to go to) the very
many cities of men’ in 267 (the echo of 1.1–3 underscores for the narratees
the truth of Odysseus’ words in 248–50: his odyssey has not really come to an
end yet) and (ii) the change of Tiresias’ ‘(the sign) will not elude you’ (11.126)
into ‘I will not conceal (the sign) from you’ (273), words which reiterate his
opening (265).

286–7 It is interesting to compare the reaction of Penelope, who draws a
positive conclusion from the last part of the prophecy, with that of Odysseus
in 11.139, who with resignation accepts the prophecy as his fate.

289–90 It now appears that during the couple’s conversation, Penelope’s
order in 177–80 (to make the bed) has been executed, an instance of *simul-
taneity. The bed being prepared by the combined efforts of Odysseus’ per-
sonal maid (Euryclea) and Penelope’s own (Eurynome) underscores their
reunion.

291–6 On only one other occasion do we hear of a person being accom-
panied to bed by a servant carrying a torch: Telemachus in 1.428–35. There
it indicated his position as a child, here it may evoke a marriage procession
and hence, like the (hoax) marriage song, signal the renewal of the marriage
between Odysseus and Penelope; cf. II. 18.491–3, where brides are led
through the city to the accompaniment of torch-light and song.

296 Alexandrian scholars considered this line the τέλος/πέρας, ‘end’,
‘climax’, of the Odyssey. In their wake, many scholars have branded the
remainder of the Odyssey inauthentic, corroborating their case by pointing
out linguistic and stylistic irregularities.15 Even if the last part of the poem

15 For an overview of analytic attacks on Book 24, cf. Russo, Galiano-Fernandez, and Heubeck
does indeed display a rather hasty, occasionally unusual narrative style (cf. 24.1–204nn.), having the story end at this point would be anachronistic (an ending with the reunited couple in bed together suits the romantic taste of the Hellenistic period, but the archaic age demands a public reintegration of the hero); premature (two subjects introduced earlier by the narrator, Odysseus’ reunion with Laertes and the reaction of the Suitors’ families to the killing, have not yet been completed); and too abrupt (even though the Homeric epics end far less markedly than they begin, in that they lack an epilogue,\(^\text{16}\), we do need some form of closure\(^\text{17}\)). For the ways in which this closure is effected, cf. Introduction to 24.

300–42 It is a nice touch of realism that after the love-making – which is described elliptically ‘after they had enjoyed sweet love-making’ – the two are still too excited to fall asleep and start talking again:

A 300–1 the two enjoyed themselves with telling each other stories, (the *significant use of the dual underscores the closeness between husband and wife)
B 302–5 she (telling) how much she had suffered from the Suitors,
C 306–8a he how much sorrow he had caused others, and how much he had suffered himself.
A’ 308b She enjoyed listening to him
D 308c–309 and she did not fall asleep until he had told everything.
C’ 310–42 He started telling how X, and then how Y, and how Z...
D’ 342–3 Having finished, he fell asleep.

Since all has ended well for them, both Odysseus and Penelope can now enjoy (τερπέσθην, ἔτέρπετ’ ) telling and hearing their stories, whereas earlier they had to cry (Penelope in 1.336–44; Odysseus in 8.83–92, 521–31; 9.2–38); cf. 8.83–92n.

303 ἀδήλως, ‘destructive’, when used of human beings, belongs to the character-language †: five times speech, once embedded focalization (here, shifter: ‘watching’).

310–41 For the third and last time Odysseus tells the story of his nostos; cf. 10.15–16n. His report is in indirect speech (the longest instance in Homer). The narrator was obviously loath to have Odysseus’ Apologue in

\(^{16}\) Van Groningen (1958: 70–7).
\(^{17}\) Fowler (1989).
Books 9–12 and his own narrative of Odysseus’ arrival at and stay with the Phaeacians (Books 5–8 + 13) repeated (cf. Odysseus’ own dictum of 12.452–3: ‘it is hateful to me to tell a story over again, when it has been well told’), but the fact that Odysseus’ storytelling takes up all the – prolonged – night suggests that he tells Penelope his story in substantially the same amount of detail as when he recounted it to the Phaeacians.\textsuperscript{18} When the narratees compare the two versions, they may note some differences. (i) Odysseus consistently speaks in the singular, although up until the eating of Helius’ cattle, he was with his companions and a plural (which we find in the greater part of the \textit{Apologue}) would have been appropriate; in this way, the story becomes his personal tale of glory and woe (cf. 306–7). (ii) He emphatically marks the decisive moments when he lost all his ships but one (319–20) and all his companions (331–2). (iii) He trims his story with a view to his present addressee, Penelope: of the ‘Circe’ episode, only the negative first part is referred to (her witchcraft, i.e., when Odysseus’ men are changed into pigs), not its positive second part (his year-long amorous séjour with her); again, his – initially voluntarily, later forced – affair with Calypso (cf. 5.151–8) is passed over, and, finally, his encounter with Nausicaa is completely suppressed, despite his promise to pray to her on his return (8.464–8).

In this mirror-story \textsuperscript{†}, in the form of an external \textsuperscript{+} internal analepsis, we find the events presented in their chronological order, in other words, we are given the fabula \textsuperscript{†} of the \textit{Odyssey}, as if to allow the narratees to compare – and admire – the much more subtle and complex order of the story \textsuperscript{†} as told by the narrator.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{344–8} A unique *sunrise: just as earlier Athena had delayed the sunrise (241–6n.), she now, again *‘thought of something else’ and urged it on. The closeness of god and hero comes to the fore once more, in that the common transitional phrase ‘when he had enjoyed sex and sleep’ (cf., e.g., 19.213) is replaced by ‘when she thought that Odysseus had enjoyed sex and sleep’.

\textbf{350–65} This *‘table of contents’ speech shows Odysseus fully restored to his status of master of the house and king. From the past, he tells Penelope, it is now time to turn to the present (350–3): he will restore his goods and herds (354–8, an external prolepsis \textsuperscript{†}), the loss of which at the hands of the Suitors had been so much deplored by Penelope just a few moments before

(304–5); he will go to the fields, to meet his father (359–60; an internal prolepsis † of 24.205–412); she is to go upstairs, because soon the news of the slaughter of the Suitors will become known (361–5, an internal prolepsis † of 24.413–14).

359 For the seed πολυδένδρων, ‘abounding in trees’, cf. 139n.

366–72 Execution of 359–60: Odysseus, Telemachus and the two herds- men depart for the country. From 138–40 (and 362–3) the narratees know that Odysseus not only wants to visit his father, but must also think of a way to deal with the families of the Suitors. They therefore arm themselves and, since it has become light, Athena wraps them in darkness, so as to make them invisible (the *‘mist’ motif).
The last (forty-first) day of the *Odyssey* brings an ‘Underworld’ scene (24.1–204), Odysseus’ reunion with Laertes (24.205–412), and the confrontation and reconciliation with the families of the Suitors (24.413–548). Whereas the first two parts show the usual leisurely epic pace, the narrator rushes through the last part.

Though they have been suspected from antiquity onwards, the final scenes of the *Odyssey* are indispensable; cf. 23.296n.¹ They bring the necessary closure of the story in the following ways. (i) Ring-composition † with the beginning of the story: we have another assembly of the Ithacans (24.420–66; cf. 2.1–259) and another council of the gods (24.472–88; cf. 1.26–95); for ring-composition as a closural device, cf. 13.36–63n.² (ii) A great number of characters take their curtain call: Odysseus, Telemachus, and Athena, the ghost of Achilles, the ghost of Agamemnon, Amphimedon, Laertes, the herald Medon, and the seer Halitherses.³ (iii) An important theme of the *Odyssey*, the comparison of the fates of the various Trojan War veterans, is rounded off; cf. 1–204n. (iv) Two internal analepses † together bring a retrospective of almost the entire fabula † of the *Odyssey*: 23.310–41 (Odysseus’ ten years of travel) and 24.121–85 (the Suitors’ three-year presence in the palace and their death at the hands of Odysseus). (v) Two external prolepses † inform the narratees about what will happen to Odysseus after the end of the story: 23.267–84 and 354–8.

---


² (For the *Iliad*) Whitman (1958: 259–60) and Macleod (1982: 32–5).

³ (For the *Iliad*) Taplin (1992: 253).
The action, which for some time has been stormy, enters calm water; there are natural closural motifs, such as burials (of Achilles in the past and the Suitors now) and the conclusion of a treaty, featuring Athena as a kind of proto deus ex machina. In the Iliad the peace and quiet is only temporary (cf. 24.656–70), while the Odyssey has a truly ‘happy ending’ and Zeus’ words in 486 (‘let them have peace and prosperity in abundance’) come close to the ‘and they all lived happily ever after’ of fairytales (cf. 11.134–7 = 23.281–4: Odysseus will die at an old age and his people will be happy).

1–204 This is the second ‘Underworld’ scene in the Odyssey, which may be considered a sequel to the first (Book 11), in that two important issues discussed there, (i) the comparison of the fate of Agamemnon, Achilles, and Odysseus, and (ii) the comparison of Penelope and Clytemnestra, are taken up again and concluded.

It is highly unusual that the scene has not been announced in any of the ‘table of contents’ speeches in the previous book (23.130–40 and 359–65); only Theoclymenus’ prophetic words about ‘the Suitors” ghosts filling the gateway and courtyard, longing to go to the Underworld’ (20.355–6) may be said to – vaguely – anticipate the present scene. This anomaly is one of the reasons why this passage has been deemed suspect; cf. 23.296n.

It is an instance of the ‘fill-in’ technique, covering the time during which Odysseus and his companions go from the palace to the fields (they leave in 23.370–2 and arrive in 24.205–7).

Its structure is that of the ‘meeting’ type-scene (although the ghosts of the Suitors do not set out with the intention of meeting the ghosts of Agamemnon and Achilles): they (i) set out (1–10, enlarged with a simile); pass the Ocean, etc. (11–13a; for itineraries, cf. 15.295–8); (ii) arrive at their destination, the meadow of asphodel (13b–14); (iii) find Achilles, who engages in a conversation with Agamemnon (15–98); (iv) step near (99–100); and (v) instead of addressing the persons found, are addressed (101–204; the reversal is caused by the fact that Agamemnon is surprised by the sight of the group of young men and, recognizing one of them, asks what has happened).

The main function of the scene is to provide a conclusion to the impor-

---

tant theme of the comparison of the fates of the Greek heroes who fought before Troy, which runs through the whole of the *Odyssey*; cf. Introduction to 1. When we combine what Agamemnon says here about Achilles (36–94), Odysseus (192–8), and himself (95–8, 199–202) with what Achilles previously said about life being better than heroic death (11.482–91), we see the following ascending scale:5

Agamemnon has no heroic death on the battlefield, a terrible *nostos*, and his wife Clytemnestra will have a bad reputation.

Achilles has a heroic death on the battlefield, eternal *kleos*, but no *nostos*.

Odysseus has a *nostos* and his wife Penelope will have eternal *kleos*.

1–100 Hermes escorting the ghosts towards Hades is a special variant of his regular function, to accompany mortal travellers (cf. 10.277–308). This is the only time we hear of ghosts being accompanied to Hades. Elsewhere the suggestion is that they get there on their own. How they do so is not explained (cf. Elpenor ignoring Odysseus’ question about how he got to the Underworld: 11.57–78), and it may be that Hermes’ unique intervention here flows forth from the narrator’s desire to circumvent this difficult question. Likewise, it may be due to Hermes’ presence that the ghosts cross the Styx, although they have not yet been buried (cf. 186–90; contrast Elpenor in 11.51–4), and speak without having first drunk blood (contrast 11.98–9 and *passim*). What is also striking is that the ghosts only now go to Hades; elsewhere souls leave the body immediately at the moment of death (cf. *Il. 16.856 = H11005 22.362*). Here the ‘continuity of time’ principle † may have played a role; after the massacre, the narrator devoted all his attention to Odysseus, and only now, when the ‘Odysseus’ storyline has entered a stable and uneventful phase, does he turn to the Suitors.

1–2 The change of scene †, from Odysseus on his way to the country to Hermes calling the ghosts out of the (courtyard) of the palace, is abrupt, although one could argue that the abruptness is eased slightly by some correspondence of action: Athena led Odysseus and his men outside the city (23.371–2); Hermes now leads the ghosts of the Suitors outside the palace.

2–4 For the magic wand as Hermes’ permanent attribute, cf. 5.44–8n.

5–9 The primary function of the simile † is ‘advertised’; it illustrates the

---

5 Nagy (1979: 35–41) and Wender (1978: 41–3).
‘squeaking’ of the ghosts of the Suitors: τρίζουσα (5, 7), τετριγυία (9). For ghosts being compared to birds, cf. 11.605n. In the present context the choice of bats, whose habitat is the far corner of a cave, is apt in that the ghosts are on their way to the dark depths of the Underworld, along ‘mouldering pathways’.

15–98 The situation found, which is usually described in a handful of lines, is here expanded on a unique scale: a static *catalogue (the Suitors found Achilles, Patroclus, Antilochus, and Ajax; the same group as in 11.467–70), is – not entirely logically – capped by an appositive summary † (‘thus they were gathering around him’, sc. Achilles), and then expanded into a scene (Agamemnon arrives on the scene and Achilles starts a conversation).

The conversation between Achilles and Agamemnon centres around a topic which was also regularly discussed in the first nekúia, viz. the manner of their death (and burial); cf. 11.51–225n. Apparently, Achilles and Agamemnon meet for the first time since their death; note especially the repeated  ἐρα, marking his surprise at seeing Agamemnon dead,6 in Achilles’ speech (28, 34). Strictly speaking, this is highly implausible, since they have both been in the Underworld for some ten years. The breach of realism is comparable, however, to that in the teichoskopia of the Iliad, where Priam first takes a good look at the Greek opponents in the tenth year of the war.

19 The use by the narrator of the deictic pronoun κεῖνος (to refer to a character, Achilles) is unusual.

21–34 Whereas when Odysseus saw exactly the same sight – the ghosts of Agamemnon and the companions slain together with him (21–2 = 11.388–9) – he asked after the manner of his death (11.397–403), Achilles, though surprised to see Agamemnon, knows that he did not die in Troy and died in ‘a most pitiful way’; his knowledge is best explained as an instance of ‘transference’ †.

In 30–4 Achilles depicts the kind of heroic death which Agamemnon deserved (on the Trojan field of honour and followed by burial in a tomb), and which elsewhere Telemachus and Eumaeus had wished for Odysseus (1.238–41 = 14.368–71, and cf. Odysseus himself in 5.306–11). Unwittingly, he is describing his own death, as the ensuing report by Agamemnon will make clear (he dies in Troy: 37, and is given a tomb: 80–4).

6 Denniston (1959: 35–6).
For the negative recollection of the Trojan War by Odyssean heroes, cf. 3.103–19n.

Instead of reacting to Achilles’ sighs concerning his (Agamemnon’s) lack of a proper heroic death, Agamemnon immediately embarks on a lavish – and envious – description of Achilles’ own glorious death and funeral (36–94). Only then does he return to his own death, the misery of which is now all the more clear (95–7).

An elaborate instance of the ‘funeral’ type-scene; cf. II. 18.1–238 + 19.23–33 + 282–302 + 314–39 + 23.1–897 (Patroclus) and 24.580–90 + 697–804 (Hector); and Od. 3.255–61 (a non-funeral). Its elements are: (i) recovery of the body (37b–42; enhanced through divine intervention: Zeus stops the fighting); (ii) the body is laid out on a litter, washed and anointed (43–5a); (iii) a prothesis of seventeen days, during which Achilles is mourned (45b–64; divine intervention: Thetis and her nymphs attend personally, clothe the body in divine clothes, and the Muses themselves sing the dirges); (iv) the body is burned on a pyre, together with funeral gifts (65–8a); (v) armed warriors parade around the pyre in chariots (68b–70); (vi) after the fire has been extinguished (again through the hand of a god), the bones are collected and put in an urn (a gift of Thetis and the work of Hephaestus), together with those of Patroclus (71–9; cf. the anticipations in II. 23.91–2 and 243–4); (vii) a grave mound is piled up (80–4); and (viii) funeral games are held (85–92; divine intervention: they are organized by Thetis and offer divine prizes).

Agamemnon’s report takes the rare form of a – predominantly – second-person narrative (cf. 4.234–89n.); Achilles is even made into an admiring focalizer of his own funeral (61–2, 90–2). Agamemnon also makes ample use of rhetorical devices to increase the intensity of his narrative; thus we have two ‘if not’-situations † (41–2 and 50–2), a summary priamel † (87–92: ‘you have already attended many funeral games, but seeing these prizes you would have admired them most’), a *speech within a speech (53–7), and expressive litotes (61–2: ‘there you would have seen no one who was not crying’).

The lavish report first of all serves to console Achilles; no reaction of Achilles is recorded but at least he does not reject Agamemnon’s makarismoi, as he did with Odysseus’ in 11.482–6. Secondly, it sets up for the narratees a contrast with the minimal burial of the Suitors (415–19).

Agamemnon dwells not so much on the technical construction of Achilles' grave mound (contrast the grave mounds for Patroclus and Hector: *Il*. 23.255–7 and 24.799–801) as on its function as a memorial (cf. Hector’s imaginary grave mound of *Il*. 7.80–6), so as to prepare for his conclusion that Achilles’ *kleos* will be eternal; for grave mounds and *kleos*, cf. 9.19–20n.

For games, cf. 8.104–468n.

Once more, Agamemnon is given a chance to reflect on the *‘Oresteia’* story. For the first time Zeus is invoked, as the instigator of the murder. Apart from the fact that Zeus is often made responsible for their fate by mortal characters, his appearance here seems triggered by the contrast with Achilles, who ‘was very dear to the gods’ (92). As always, Agamemnon stresses Clytemnestra’s part in the killing, which here prepares for the last instalment of the story, in which bad Clytemnestra will be contrasted with good Penelope (193–202). He also indicates explicitly that the manner of his death spoils the joy of having taken Troy; cf. 3.103–17n.

For amazement at the sight of visitors, cf. 16.4–48n.

Amphimedon was one of the last Suitors to die, after fighting bravely but ineffectively; cf. 22.241–6n. The narrator now provides a snippet of contextually relevant explicit characterization †, which explains why Agamemnon recognizes this Ithacan and which prepares for (part of) Agamemnon’s speech (114–19).

Agamemnon (A) asks after the manner of the Suitors’ death, offering some obvious causes of death (109–13; the same list had been given by Odysseus in 11.399–403), and (B) encourages his addressee to answer by referring to their status as guest-friends (114–19).

The narrator had in 104 informed the narratees that Agamemnon and Amphimedon were guest-friends; now Agamemnon specifically reminds Amphimedon of his stay with him, when together with Menelaus he came to Ithaca to persuade Odysseus to join the expedition to Troy (an external completing analepsis †).

This is one in a series of ‘young Odysseus’ anecdotes; cf. 1.257–64n. Agamemnon says only vaguely that it was difficult to persuade Odysseus; other versions outside the *Odyssey* tell of Odysseus feigning madness in order not to join the expedition.

Amphimedon answers Agamemnon’s two questions in reverse
order †: he (B’) remembers Agamemnon’s stay (121–2) and (A’) tells him how the Suitors died (123–90).

Amphimedon’s report8 is a mirror-story †, which takes the form of a repeating, partly internal, partly external analepsis †, and which, like Odysseus’ mirror-story in 23.310–41, gives a chronological account of the events which had earlier been told in anachronical order. The Sui-to’s version is largely correct, at times even repeating verbatim the narrator’s version; yet, his focalization emerges in the form of subjective character-language †, vague or incorrect attributions of divine intervention (Jörgensen’s law †), and rhetorical omissions or changes. Making ample use of his hindsight knowledge, he presents the Suitors as poor victims of deceitful opponents and biased gods:

123–4 I will tell you everything exactly, our ‘terrible’ manner of death.

(character-language: *κακόν)

125 We were wooing the wife of long-absent Odysseus,

(a matter-of-fact reference to a situation which actually lasted for three years and involved the steady destruction of Odysseus’ goods; the reference to Penelope as ‘the wife of long-absent Odysseus’ hints at a justification for their behaviour)

126 who did not say ‘yes’ or ‘no’,

(≈ 1.249, 16.126, both times spoken by Telemachus)

127 but, planning our destruction,

(an exaggeration, which, however, suits Amphimedon’s strategy of victimizing the Suitors)

128–46 devised a trick: she wove a web, which she unravelled at night.

(Amphimedon repeats Antinous’ version; cf. 2.93–110n.)

147–9 When Penelope showed the finished shroud, Odysseus came back to Ithaca,

(Amphimedon is telescoping events, making the return of Odysseus coincide with Penelope finishing the shroud; though the narratees do not know how long ago Penelope finished the shroud, in any case it happened before the beginning of the Odyssey, and hence at least thirty-nine days before Odysseus’ return. The telescoping serves his

victimizing: the Suitors had barely recovered from Penelope’s trick when already the next danger surfaced. He ascribes Odysseus’ arrival to a ‘bad *δείμων, 149, which reveals his focalization; the narratees know that it was in fact Athena.)

150 going first to Eumaeus’ hut.

151–3 There Telemachus, too, arrived on his way back from Pylos, and together the two planned ‘evil death’ for the Suitors.

154–5 Odysseus came to the palace later, Telemachus first.
(mentioning this detail, Amphimedon implies that he now sees through the shrewdness of Odysseus, who carefully avoided being seen in Telemachus’ company; cf. 16.270–3 and 17.6–15)

156–8 The swineherd led him to the palace, while he was disguised as a beggar.
(≈ the narrator’s version in 17.201b–203)

159–61 No one, not even among the elder ones, could recognize him, but we taunted him with evil words and blows,
(Amphimedon acknowledges that they treated Odysseus badly, cf. 17.360–506n., but suggests that this is mitigated by the fact that they did not know who he was)

162–3 which he for the time being quietly endured.
(in retrospect even Amphimedon cannot but admire Odysseus’ celebrated capacity to endure; a detail like ‘for the time being’ reveals that he now understands that this was all tactics of Odysseus, biding his time)

164–6 But when Zeus urged him on, he and Telemachus hid the weapons in a storeroom, carefully closing the door
(a largely correct inference, cf. 19.1–50, based on hindsight; cf. 22.24–5 and 139–41. His mentioning ‘Zeus’ instead of Athena, cf. 16.282, 19.2, 33–4, is an instance of ‘Jørgensen’s law’ †. Only the detail of the door being closed, whereas actually Telemachus left it open, cf. 22.154–6, is incorrect. Amphimedon presents the removal here, and not at the point in his story where the suitors detected it, so as to strengthen the picture of Odysseus and Telemachus plotting against them)
167–9 and shrewdly urged Penelope to organize the contest of the bow, which was to be the end of unlucky us. (an incorrect but, in the context of Amphimedon’s tale, logical inference: Odysseus was first helped by Eumaeus, then by Telemachus, and then, of course, by his wife. It suits his victimizing strategy. Character-language †: *ἀνόμορος, ‘unlucky’. The narrator may have his own reasons for having Amphimedon voice this inference; it draws attention to (i) his own originality in not following the expected, and perhaps traditional plot, which has husband and wife scheming together against the enemy; and (ii) Odysseus’ unique restraint in not immediately running to his wife, as any man would have done; cf. 13.333–89).

170–5 No one was able to string the bow, but when it was Odysseus’ turn, we all shouted that it should not be given to him. But Telemachus, alone, exhorting him, ordered that it should. (a condensed version of 21.80–379; the *(all) the others, but X alone’ motif highlights the ‘conspiracy’ of Odysseus and Telemachus)

176–7 When he had taken the bow, he strung it easily and shot through the iron. (a condensed version of 21.393–423)

178–9 He stood on the threshold and with a frightening look in his eyes shot Antinous. (a condensed version of 22.1–43)

180–5 Next, he shot arrows at the others and soon, obviously with the help of a god, all the Suitors were killed. (a condensed version of 22.44–389. He stresses that the Suitors never stood a chance against this divinely supported team.)

186–90 Thus we died but our bodies are still unburied, because our families do not know that we have been killed. (for the ghost’s knowledge of the state of his body, cf. Elpenor in 11.72. Amphimedon’s reference to the families of the suitors once more, cf. 23.361–5, prepares for the confrontation between Odysseus and their families in 412–548)

191–202 Although the speech-introduction indicates Amphimedon as Agamemnon’s addressee, he is in fact apostrophizing the absent Odysseus;
cf. Eurykleia in 19.363–81. This address is clearly devised to complement (i) his speech in 36–97 (cf. 1–204n.) and (ii) his conversation with Odysseus in 11.387–466. There Agamemnon announced that Penelope would never kill Odysseus because she is sensible (11.444–6), here he concludes that — somewhat to his surprise: ἐρα — she displayed a noble mind and well remembered Odysseus (195; an instance of the *forgetting/remembering* motif).

While in Book 11 talk of Clytemnestra led to Penelope, Agamemnon now does not miss the opportunity to return once more (cf. 96–7) to his own wife. In this last instalment of the *‘Oresteia’* story, Agamemnon’s fate is no longer held up as a — warning — example to Odysseus, but, conversely, Penelope’s behaviour is used to — definitively — condemn Clytemnestra; for comparisons between Penelope and Clytemnestra, cf. 11.409–56n. Penelope’s good reputation will be eternal and preserved in ‘pleasing’ songs made by the gods, but the songs about Clytemnestra will be ‘hateful’ and give all women a bad name; despite the positive example of Penelope, Agamemnon retains his misogyny: 201–2 = 11.433–4.

For Homeric characters anticipating songs about themselves, cf. 8.579–80n. For Penelope’s *kleos*, cf. 2.125–6n.

203–5 The change of scene †, from the Underworld to Odysseus on his way to the country, lacks correspondence but is prepared for by an appositive summary †.

205–412 After numerous references to *Laertes*, this character is finally allowed to enter the stage. In view of the social context in which Odysseus’ return is seen (cf. 1.1n.), it is inevitable that a reunion with his father (picturing Odysseus as ‘son’) should be included. This figure is symbolic, first, of the neglect of Odysseus’ household (cf. the dog Argus) and of the effects which the absence of a son may have on an old father (cf. Priam’s picture of old Peleus in *Il*. 24.486–9), later, of the happy ending of the *Odyssey* (the last scene of the poem will picture the three generations of the Odysseus clan fighting side by side: 502–28; cf. 16.118–20).

The overall structure of the scene is that of the *‘visit’* type-scene, but with so many variations that the pattern at times becomes obscured:10 (i) Odysseus and the others (Telemachus, Eumaeus, Philoetius) set out (205a, a resumption, after the interruption through the ‘Underworld’ scene, of 23.370–2); (ii) they arrive at their destination (205b–212; expanded with a

10 Arend (1933: 48).
scenery description); Odysseus suggests that they split up, the others going to the house, he to his father in the fields (213–219); Odysseus continues his journey (220–1); (iii) does not find Dolius (222–5; for negated ‘find’ scenes, cf. 5.76–91n.), but finds his father working in the garden (226–31; expanded with a description of Laertes’ outward appearance); (vi) a conversation, leading to Odysseus’ recognition, ensues (232–360); (i’) Odysseus and Laertes set out for Laertes’ house (361); (ii’) arrive at their destination (362); (iii’) find Telemachus and the others preparing the meal (363–4); (vii) Laertes is given a bath (365–83); and (v) all have a meal (385–412; interrupted by the scene in which Odysseus is greeted by Dolius and his sons).

205–12 In accordance with the Odyssean interest in scenery †, Laertes’ farmland and farmhouse are described, with Odysseus as implicit focalizer (as witness the past tenses; cf. 5.63–75n.) and the narrator intruding upon his focalization (adding information which Odysseus cannot know: the role of the Sicilian woman). The description is spatial (‘on the farmland was a farmhouse, around which . . . and in which . . .’) and, as often, includes a piece of history (‘which Laertes once . . .’) and the habits of the inhabitants (‘on which they were wont to . . .’ ‘who took care of . . .’). All information is relevant to what follows: Laertes’ efforts to get the land cultivated will be recalled in 336–44, his slaves helping him prepares for 222–5 and 387–412, and the old slave woman from Sicily will play a role in 365–6 and 388–90.

211–12 The explicit characterization † of the old Sicilian slave woman who takes care of Laertes after his retreat to the country proceeds in small chunks: in 1.191–2 (actorial) we hear that she gives him food, here (narratorial) that in general she kindly takes care of him, and in 389–90 (narratorial) that she likewise takes care of her own husband Dolius. The fact that she herself is old adds to the pathos of the whole situation in which the former king of Ithaca finds himself. She and her husband belong to the group of Odysseus’ old faithful retainers (who are contrasted to the young unfaithful ones); cf. 1.428–35n.

213–18 Odysseus’ two suggestions (A) Telemachus and the servants are to go to the house and prepare a meal, (B) he will meet his father, will be executed in parallel order †, so as to allow the second, more important, element to be expanded: (A’) they quickly went to the house (220a), but Odysseus went to Laertes (220b–361).

214–15 It is typical of *Odysseus to see to it that his men have eaten before the battle begins (cf. 7.215–21n. and II. 19.155–72); he will also
hearten his father by exhorting him to eat (358–60) and urge his loyal servant Dolius to forget his amazement and eat (394–6).

216–349 Odysseus’ meeting with his father is the last instance of the *‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern:* we find the familiar elements of (ii) *the test* (216–79; cf. πειρήσομαι: 216, πειρήσατο: 238, πειρήθηναι: 240); (iii) lying tale (244–79 + 303–14); (iv) self-revelation (318–26); (v) scepticism (327–9); (vi) semata (331–44); and (vii) emotional reunion (345–9).

Scholars have accused Odysseus of cruelty and the narrator of irrelevance; why should Odysseus hide his identity and test his father when the Suitors are dead and there is no need for secrecy anymore, and when he has been given ample proof of Laertes’ devotion to him (in the form of stories about the old man’s grief)? The narratorial motivation † for this scene is the need to ‘pump up’ the reunion, in order to give it the dramatic weight it deserves. After all, it has been prepared for all through the Odyssey and a quick revelation would have turned it into an anti-climax. Odysseus’ actorial motivation † is more difficult to explain: the narratees may invoke the parallel of his reunion with Penelope, where likewise he had received nothing but positive reports and yet tested her (cf. 19.45) and wanted to be recognized by her first (cf. 23.91–2). As in the reunion with Penelope, there is the ‘biter bit’ mechanism: Odysseus intends his father to recognize him (cf. 216–18) but, overwhelmed by his emotions, he will reveal himself; cf. 227–33, 235–40, and 318–22nn.

As in the ‘recognition’ scenes with Telemachus and Penelope, the narrator employs the device of periphrastic denomination † to underscore what is at issue, the reunion of ‘father’ (226, 236, 280) and ‘son’ (243, 347).

In the first half of the meeting the characters avoid using Odysseus’ name, instead referring to him in oblique ways (the *‘suppression of Odysseus’ name’ motif*): ‘a guest-friend of mine’ (263), ‘a man’ (266; the narratees are reminded of ‘the man’ in 1.1), ‘a man from Ithacan stock’ (269), ‘the son of Laertes, son of Arcesias’ (270), and ‘that poor guest of yours, my unhappy son’ (288–90). Coming from ‘the stranger’/Odysseus, the device builds up the tension (only at the very end does he disclose that this dearest of all his guest-friends is Odysseus); used by Laertes, it gives expression to his grief.

An unannounced but logical action: Odysseus gives the weapons, which he had donned in 23.366, to his servants, so as not to appear before his father in full armour (in 306–8 he will pose as a traveller, whose ship has been driven off course). He will take up his weapons again in 495–500.

Not only is Odysseus getting closer to his goal, the narrator, too, zooms in (cf. 3.4–67n.), now replacing ‘the field’ in 205 by the more specific πολυκάρπου ἀλωνίς, ‘orchard with many fruits’; the epithet (which occurs only once more, 7.122, again significantly) is a seed †, since fruit-trees will play an important role in the ensuing scene. Cf. πολυθένδρως in 23.139n. and the pear tree of 234.

The narrator takes care to clear the stage for the reunion between father and son; cf. 14.24–8; 16.1–3, and 130–55. Though negated ‘find’ scenes are not uncommon, this one is unusual since nowhere had Odysseus announced that he wanted to meet Dolius (as well as Laertes). The narratrices have to recall from 4.735–7 that there is a Dolius, slave of Penelope, who keeps the gardens for her. The only reason the slave and his sons are mentioned here is to prepare for their entrance in 386–411.

The *Laertes Odysseus finds lives up to the picture created of him in earlier references: he is working in his garden (cf. 1.193; 11.193), digging out a plant, a rough job for which he has to protect his body (cf. 11.190–4, where we hear how he sleeps on the ground), and is wearing squalid and patched-up clothing (cf. 11.191). His leggings made of oxhide and cap made of goat-skin (instead of bronze) recall the simple ways of Eumaeus’ household (cf. Introduction to 14).

As usual (cf. 1.106–12n.), the situation found is focalized by the arriving person; here the narrator explicitly registers that Odysseus sees his father ‘suffering from old age and having great grief in his heart’ (232–3), by way of preparation for the hero’s outburst of emotion (234) and deliberation (235–40).

The detail of Odysseus standing under a ‘pear tree’ prepares for 245–7 and above all 340–4.

The conversation between visitor and host is normally opened by the host; here the visitor Odysseus, intent upon testing his father, takes the initiative in the *identification ritual and asks after the old man’s master. Laertes will not ask for the visitor’s name until 298–301.

An *‘indirect deliberation’ scene, which consists of a – unique – combination of an infinitive construction (‘he contemplated doing X’; cf.
10.151–2) with a ‘whether’ clause. This format suggests how close Odysseus already is to revealing himself (instead of waiting for Laertes to recognize him first; cf. 216–18); soon the sight of his father’s tears (because of him) will finally break down his resistance and induce him to reveal himself (318–20).

242 The narratees are reminded once more of Laertes performing a menial task (cf. 226–7); the detail of his ‘holding down his head’ may have been inserted to explain why he does not recognize Odysseus, who this time is not disguised.

244–79 Odysseus opens the conversation:

You take good care of your trees and plants (244–7).
transitional formula (248)
But you do not take good care of yourself (249–55).
(note the repetition of κομίζει: 245, 247, 249, κομιδή: 251)
transitional formula (256)
A Who is your master (257)?
B Have I really come to Ithaca, as a man I met told me (258–60)?
C He did not dare tell me about a guest-friend of mine, whether he still lives or already is dead (261–4).
transitional formula (265):
D I once entertained him and gave him many gifts (266–79).

Odysseus’ speech is a carefully built-up, psychologically effective construction: he starts by flattering Laertes, then scolds him (as ‘don’t be angry at my words’, 248, indicates, these are the ‘provoking words’ announced in 240), and finally spends the greater part of his speech on Odysseus, further ingratiating himself with the old man by stressing how he entertained him, and listing the many gifts he gave him. For the build-up of tension as regards the identity of his ‘dear guest’, cf. 216–349n.

Consciously bringing up Odysseus is a reversal of the dramatic irony found so often in the context of prolonged recognitions, when speakers spontaneously start talking about the unrecognized person in his presence; cf. 4.104–12n. This is the testing. How will Laertes react to the mention of his son? Has he forgotten him (like the Suitors and the unfaithful servants) or does he still mourn over him and long for him (like Penelope and the faithful servants)?
Odysseus’ (dissimulating) speech is the first instalment of a *lying tale, which will be continued in 303–14. This version differs from the other lying tales in that he does not adopt a Cretan identity and has nothing to do with Troy; it resembles them in that he has been driven off course, typically by a *δαιμόνιον, to Ithaca (306–7) and once entertained Odysseus, who was on his way home (266–79, 309–14); cf. Appendix E.

246–7 The lists of trees and plants reveal their proud owner and prepare for 340–4.

280–301 Laertes of course passes the test with flying colours. The very mention of Odysseus brings tears into his eyes, and his speech makes amply clear his affection for his son. He reacts to most of the points raised by the stranger, in an associative rather than a formal order, and asks questions of his own:

B’ Yes, you have reached Ithaca, which is now, however, in the hands of overbearing men (281–2).

D’ Those gifts you gave are in vain.

(catch-word technique †: δῶρα . . . τὰῦτα picks up δῶρα in 273)

If you had found him alive at home, he would have given you gifts and hospitality in return (283–6).

transitional formula (287)

E When did you entertain my unhappy son (288–90a)?

(unobtrusively Laertes confirms the stranger’s suspicion that he is not a slave but a king; cf. 252–5, and reveals that he is the father of Odysseus and hence the Laertes of 270)

C’ Fishes or wild animals have eaten him, instead of being lamented by his parents and wife (290b–296).

transitional formula (297)

F But who are you and where do you come from (298–301)?

289–90 For δυστηνὸν and δυσμορὸν as typical qualifications of Odysseus, cf. 1.48–62n.

289 For the nostalgic idiom ‘if ever he (really) existed’, cf. 15.267–70n.

290–6 Like many members of Odysseus’ oikos, Laertes is pessimistic about Odysseus and assumes he is dead; cf. 1.158–68. This is the most elaborate instance of the ‘lack of care after death’ motif in the Odyssey; cf. 14.133–6n.: Laertes not only paints a horrid picture of the fate of Odysseus’
body, but also explicitly contrasts it with the proper care (mourning) by parents and wife which it should have received.

303–14 Odysseus continues his lying tale (cf. 244–79n.) and answers Laertes’ two questions in reverse order †:

(prelude) I will tell you everything truthfully (303)
F’ I am from Alybas, I am the son of Aphidas, and my name is Eperitus (304–8).
E’ I entertained Odysseus five years ago. At that time we still expected to meet in friendship and exchange gifts (309–14).
(he harks back to Laertes’ words in 285–6)

Whereas on other occasions ‘the stranger’/Odysseus had announced the return of Odysseus, he now concurs with the old man’s pessimism (cf. the repetition of δύσμορος: 311) and, stressing their joy at the favourable omens and optimism at the time, deepens the tragic contrast with how things ‘really’ turned out.

303 For the claim that one is telling the truth just prior to a lie, cf. 1.179n.
304 The emphatic initial position of εἴμι (cf. 9.19–20n.) underscores the self-confidence of Odysseus’ assumed personality.
313 For the typical κεῖνος to refer to the absent Odysseus, cf. 1.163n.
315–17 Laertes reacts with gestures of mourning (cf. Il. 18.23–7; 22.414; 24.163–5, and 640). The news that ‘the stranger’ saw Odysseus five years ago confirms his conviction that his son is dead.
318–22 The sight of his father mourning him is too much for Odysseus and now he does what he contemplated doing in 236: he kisses and embraces him and reveals himself, using his typical disclosure formula (321–2; cf. 16.205–6n.).
323–61 Odysseus not only reveals himself but also tells Laertes that he killed the Suitors and suggests that they must hurry (to deal with the Suitors’ families). But of course his father first needs confirmation concerning his identity. Only then is the subject of the Suitors and their families taken up again.12
328 For this type of sceptical εἰ-clause, cf. 23.36n.
331–44 The typical element of the *tokens is given an individual twist.

The sign of the scar is used once again, but anticipating that, as in the case of Penelope, this will not be enough (cf. 23.166–230n.), Odysseus adds a token which, like the token of the bed, is known only to his addressee and himself (and symbolizes their relationship): the trees and plants which his father gave him when he was a boy.

331–5 In this – brief – version of the story behind the scar (cf. 19.392–468n.) we find one detail highlighted which remains implicit in other versions, viz. Odysseus’ parents sending him to Autolycus. It is inserted, of course, with an eye on his present addressee (note Odysseus’ use of second-person narration in 333).

345–9 The typical element of the emotional reunion is given an individual twist, in that old and feeble Laertes faints with joy in the arms of his son.

351–2 For Laertes’ claim that Odysseus’ bloody revenge is sanctioned by the gods, cf. 22.35–41n. His apprehension (‘I fear that the Ithacans will come here’) anticipates the last scene of the story (412ff.).

353–60 Only now does Laertes return to the question of the families of the Suitors; cf. 323–61n. Somewhat illogically (after his own haste in 324), but not uncharacteristically (cf. 214–15n.), Odysseus suggests that they eat first.

365–83 An instance of the *‘bathing’* type-scene: Laertes is (ii) washed (365–6a) and (iii) anointed by the Sicilian servant (366b); (iv) receives a set of good clothing (367a); is beautified by Athena (367b–369; a *‘beautification’* scene); (v) leaves the bathtub (370a), and is admired by Odysseus, who sees that he now resembles the gods (370b–371) and guesses that ‘one of the gods’ (Jörgensen’s law †) has beautified him (372–4); Laertes, taking his cue from Odysseus’ observation, prays for youthful power to match his beautified body (375–82). Usually it is the arriving guest who is given a bath. Here it is the host Laertes; Odysseus having come back, he need no longer neglect himself (cf. 227–9).

The washing takes place while the meal is being prepared; one of the rare instances of explicit *simultaneity* in the *Odyssey*.

376–82 For this type of nostalgic wish, which here takes the form of a counterfactual (*‘if only, such as I was when . . . being such I had . . . then I would have . . .’*), cf. 1.253–69n. Laertes will in fact get a chance to show his mettle in the brief battle with the relatives of the Suitors (516–25).

386–411 The reunion between *Dolius* and his sons and Odysseus: they recognize their master right away (no more delayed recognitions) and react
with amazement (cf. 16.4–48n.). In friendly words, Odysseus cuts short his loyal servant’s amazement by inviting him to eat (cf. 214–15n.; his remark that they had all the time been waiting for them has not been prepared for; an instance of *emancipation of speech). But this loyal servant is not to be stopped: he kisses his master (cf. 16.14–16; 17.35, 39) and greets him in a variant of a *‘welcome’ speech (note the ‘I had thought never to see you again’ motif; cf. 17.41–2n., and χαὶρε). He shows himself a loyal servant of Penelope when he immediately thinks of informing his mistress. Odysseus brushes aside his suggestion; an instance of the *‘rejected suggestion’ device, which here does not enhance the narratees’ interest in the actual course of events, but rather repeats what they know already.

The scene prepares for 497–9 where Dolius and his sons will fight faithfully at Odysseus’ side.

388–9 The event of the Sicilian servant calling her husband and sons is only recounted afterwards, in a – for the narrator unusual – internal completing analepsis †.

407 For one-line speeches, cf. 7.342n.

412–548 The final part of the Odyssey deals with a topic prepared for from the very beginning of the story. As far back as 1.380 = 2.145 Telemachus prayed for the Suitors to die inside the palace ‘unavenged’. But as their death approaches, the certainty of their families wanting to avenge them became clearer (cf. 20.41–3; 23.118–52, 362–3; and 24.353–5), and it is evident that the story cannot come to a close before a solution has been reached.

412–14 The change of scene †, from the farmhouse to Rumour going through the city, lacks correspondence, but is prepared for by an appositive summary †. In 23.137–40 Odysseus had foreseen that the rumour (kleos) of the Suitors’ death would spread all over town. This now happens in the form of Zeus’s messenger Rumour (Ossa); cf. II. 2.93–4.


415–19 The burial of the Suitors is narrated very briefly: are they buried in haste and without ceremony, or is it merely the narrator who refrains from honouring the Suitors with a ‘funeral’ type-scene? In view of the fact that a normal funeral takes up several days, whereas here we remain in day forty-one, the first alternative would appear correct.
420–66 An *‘assembly’ type-scene: (i) the families of the Suitors spontaneously gather in the marketplace (420–1); (ii) Eupeithes proposes to avenge their dead sons (422–37); (iii) the assembly reacts with pity (438); (iv) but other speakers reject the proposal (Medon: 439–49, Halitherses: 454–62); and (v) the meeting splits up: more than half follow Eupeithes against Odysseus, the others remain behind (463–6).

This ‘assembly’ scene should be clearly connected with that in 2.1–259:13 not only do they feature the same (Halitherses) and similar speakers (Aegyptius = father who has lost a son because of Odysseus’ wanderings, and Eupeithes = father who has lost a son because of Odysseus’ revenge), but the earlier assembly is even referred to (by Halitherses: 456–60). In this way the scene contributes to the closure of the Odyssey; cf Introduction. It also features two speakers who emphasize once more that Odysseus’ revenge was willed by the gods (for this claim, cf. 22.35–41n.) and thereby help the Ithacans (and the narratees) to accept the ending of the Odyssey, Odysseus being exempt from the revenge of the families of the Suitors.

The overarching structure of the speeches is the parallel form †:

Eupeithes

A This man has done a great (= evil) deed to the Greeks, destroying some on his travels, killing others on his return (426–9).
B Therefore, before he escapes elsewhere, let us go. For it would be a disgrace if we did not avenge our sons. But let us go, before they escape (430–7).

Medon

A’ Odysseus has not done these deeds against the will of the gods, for I have seen how a god in the shape of Mentor assisted him (443–9). (exploiting the ‘catch-word’ technique †, Medon replaces Eupeithes’ aggressive ‘an evil deed’ by the neutral ‘these deeds’)

Halitherses

A’ These deeds have taken place because of your own depravity. For you did not listen to me and Mentor when we warned you to stop your sons, who in their recklessness perpetrated a great deed (454–60). (exploiting the ‘catch-word’ technique, Halitherses reverts Eupeithes’ accusation of Odysseus having committed ‘an evil deed’ against the Suitors themselves)
B’ Listen to me: let us not go, lest we incur even more evil (461–2).

422–5 Until now the narratees had heard of Eupeithes only in connection with Antinous, ‘Eupeithes’ son’. Now the roles are reversed and the father is at the centre of events. The narrator intrudes upon his embedded focalization † (shifter: ‘grief for . . .’), by adding the detail ‘first’ (something which the father cannot know); an instance of paralepsis †. The internal repeating analepsis † ‘whom Odysseus killed first’ adds pathos; cf. 2.20: Antiphus (‘whom the Cyclops ate last’).

439–49 *Medon and *Phemius are the only survivors of the massacre and their sudden appearance surprises the Ithacans. Medon’s report (445–9) is an internal repeating analepsis †: Athena had assisted Odysseus in the shape of Mentor (cf. 22.205–35) and had chased the Suitors through the megaron (cf. 22.297–309). In accordance with Jörgensen’s law †, he speaks of ‘a god’ instead of Athena. His perception of Odysseus’ divine assistance had not been recorded by the narrator, an instance of *emancipation of speech.

452 The narrator inserts a piece of explicit characterization † and thereby, in combination with the speech-introduction 453 (cf. 7.156–8n.) recommends Halitherses’ speech. For persons who are able to look forward and backward, cf. Il. 1.343 (Calchas); 3.109–10 (Priam); and 18.250 (Polydamas).

454–62 Halitherses’ back-reference to his and Mentor’s warning words at the first assembly, an internal repeating analepsis †, serves a double function: (i) to make clear that Odysseus’ slaughter of their sons is in fact their own fault; (ii) to strengthen his present warning: at that time they did not listen to him and incurred sorrow, now they should listen to him and avoid new misery.

465–6 The wordplay Εὐπείθεις πείθοντ, ‘they were persuaded by Well-persuasive’, is inserted by the narrator to explain implicitly why so many listened to Eupeithes, who was wrong, rather than Halitherses, who was right. A similar situation is found in Il. 18.310–13 (there the illogicality of the choice of the masses is explained by divine intervention).

469–71 A *narratorial intervention, combining a comment (‘in his folly’) and an internal repeating prolepsis † (Eupeithes will be killed in 523–5), which is marked by *proleptic μέλλων; cf. esp. Il. 2.37–41.

472 An abrupt change of scene †, from the families of the Suitors marching out to the country to Olympus. Athena’s interpellation must have been caused by her perception of their arming and setting out, but the narrator – unusually – neither records her perception nor has her refer to it in her speech.
The story ends as it began, with a divine council. Its main function is to make Zeus sanction the happy ending of the story (cf. 23.296n.) and to prepare Athena’s intervention as *deus ex machina* (528–48).

Another abrupt change of scene †; instead of following in the footsteps of Athena and arriving with her on Ithaca, the narrator moves ahead, not to the families of the relatives (who he had left in 471, before turning to Olympus), but to Odysseus (whom he had left in 412). The effect is that the arrival of ‘the attackers’ (490–4) and the divine helper (502–4) will be looked at from the point of view of ‘the defenders’; the same technique as in 16.1–153n.

The perception by the Odysseus party of the arrival of the Suitors’ relatives is described in a staccato style (for one-line speeches, cf. 7.342n.):

*Odysseus*  ‘Let someone go out and see whether they are near.’
*narrator*  A son of Dolius went out and saw
             (embedded focalization) all of them near.
*son of Dolius*  ‘They are close by.’

An instance of the *‘X acted as Y ordered’ motif.*

In this highly abbreviated ‘arming’ scene the detail of Laertes and Dolius arming themselves despite their age stands out and prepares for Laertes’ heroic role in 516–24.

One last time the narrator uses the device of retardation †: Zeus’s words in 482–6 suggested that Athena would immediately interfere and reconcile the two parties, but she first supports the Arcesiadae (502–4, 516–20) before intervening (528–35) and, after what seems to be a forceful reminder by Zeus (539–40), arranging a treaty (540–8). Thus, the three generations of the Arcesiadae are given a chance to show their mettle (Laertes: 520–5, Odysseus and Telemachus: 526–7); similarly 22.236–8.

In this instance of a ‘god meets mortal’ scene, the narrator is less clear than usual about Athena’s status; at the opening and the end of the scene he says that she adopted the mortal disguise of Mentor (503, 548); in 504 Odysseus recognizes her (as he did in 22.205–7); in her exchange with Laertes there is no indication that she reveals herself or that the old man recognizes her; however, the fearful reaction of the Ithacans in 533 suggests that she addresses them in her divine form.

Whereas the heroism of Odysseus and Telemachus remains confined to
martial words (505–9 + 511–12), a summary of their actual fighting (526–7), and a comparison (538; cf. II. 15.690, 22.308; a last instance of the *‘bird’ imagery), Laertes, whom, after all, the narratees had not seen in action during the fight with the Suitors, is honoured with a ‘battle’ scene (516–25).

505–12 This little exchange between Odysseus and Telemachus concerning the latter’s heroism comes a bit late, seeing that the boy had already amply proved his worth during the battle with the Suitors. In its stress on ‘not shaming one’s race’ (508, 512), however, it does fit this family battle (cf. 502–48n. and Laertes’ satisfaction in 514–15). It also recalls the exchange on Telemachus’ discretion: 16.299–310.

516–25 The narrator contributes to Laertes’ restoration by overlaying his battle-scene with a heroic patina: Athena fills him with menos (cf., e.g., II. 5.461–70; 13.43–65); for 524, cf. II. 5.538 and 17.518; for 525, cf. II. 4.504. The specific detail of a warrior first having to pray recurs only once: II. 4.100–21. The motif is given a characteristic Odyssean touch of ambiguity †, in that Laertes is asked by ‘Mentor’/Athena to pray to Athena (and Zeus); cf. 3.41–61.

528–48 Athena’s peace mission starts off as an ‘if not’-situation †, which subtly suggests that if not for Athena, Odysseus and his men would have gained a full victory. Next, she addresses the warring parties, using the vocative ‘Ithacans’ to remind them that they are in fact fellow citizens, and urges them to stop the bloodshed. The parties at first do not react exactly as they should. The relatives are only frightened by the goddess’ intervention and flee towards the city, to save their own lives, and Odysseus pursues them. Only after a second speech by Athena, this time addressed to Odysseus and backed up by a reference to Zeus’s authority (544), does the reconciliation (in the form of a treaty: 546; cf. 483) follow.

Athena’s intervention may be seen as the prototype for the deus ex machina of later drama, especially Euripidean drama: she issues a command concerning the future of the mortal agents, who react with awe or, in the case of Odysseus, who recognizes her, joy. In contrast to the later deus ex machina Athena does not make a sudden entrance from outside the world of the narrative, rather she has inhabited it from the very beginning. But she shares with many of her successors the important task of bringing to a satisfactory close a story which could never have ended with the good king *Odysseus, characterized at the opening as a man eager to save the lives of his companions (1.6), killing all his own people.
In principle, the fabula of a narrative text contains all the events which are presented in the story, i.e., in the main story and embedded stories. In the case of the Odyssey, this would mean that the fabula runs from Odysseus’ youthful expedition to Mount Parnassus (or were Laertes’ acquisition of Euryclea or the kidnapping of little Eumaeus earlier?) until his gentle death at a great age. In practice, it is more useful to concentrate on those events which form a unity; in the case of the Odyssey, the twenty years of Odysseus’ absence and the forty-one days of his return home.

The main events of the Odyssean fabula are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Odysseus abroad</th>
<th>Ithaca</th>
<th>Other people and locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>departure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>fall of Troy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aegisthus seduces Clytemnestra (3.269–72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>one-year stay with Circe (10.467–70)</td>
<td></td>
<td>return of Nestor (3.130–83) return and death of Agamemnon (4.512–37)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
visit to Underworld
arrival at Calypso’s
(7.259–60)

Suitors’ ‘siege’ begins
Orestes kills Aegisthus
(2.89–90) (3.305–8)

(ruse of web detected
(2.106–9)

(fated) return
(2.175)

**Days in year 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1.26–1.444) divine assembly; Athena visits Telemachus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(2.1–434) assembly of the Ithacans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>(3.1–403) Telemachus visits Nestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(3.404–90) Telemachus travels to Pherae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>(3.491–4.305) Telemachus in Sparta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>(4.306–847) Penelope and Suitors hear about Telemachus’ departure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>(5.1–227) Hermes visits Calypso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–11</td>
<td>(5.228–62) Odysseus builds his raft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–28</td>
<td>(5.263–78) Odysseus sails without problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29–30</td>
<td>(5.279–389) storm and shipwreck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>(5.390–6.47) Odysseus lands on Scheria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>(6.48–7.347) Odysseus is received by the Phaecian royal family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>(8.1–13.17) Odysseus is entertained and recounts his adventures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>(13.18–92) Odysseus is conveyed to Ithaca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>(13.93–15.43) Odysseus lands on Ithaca and meets Athena and Eumaeus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>(15.44–188) Telemachus travels to Pherae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>(15.189–494) Telemachus sails to Ithaca; Odysseus and Eumaeus talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>(15.495–16.481) Odysseus and Telemachus reunited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>(17.1–20.90) Odysseus returns to his palace and incognito meets with Suitors and Penelope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>(20.91–23.346) bow-contest, revenge, and reunion with Penelope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>(23.347–24.548) reunion with Laertes and settlement with the families of the Suitors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

APPENDIX B
THE CONTINUITY OF TIME PRINCIPLE AND THE ‘INTERLACE’ TECHNIQUE

In the *Odyssey* three storylines\(^1\) are handled in a virtuoso way by the narrator. We start with the ‘Odysseus’ storyline, to which in 1.95 is added the ‘Telemachus–Ithaca’ storyline. When Telemachus leaves Ithaca in 2.434, this storyline is split in a ‘Telemachus’ storyline and an ‘Ithaca’ storyline. The storylines gradually merge: first the ‘Odysseus’ storyline and the ‘Telemachus’ storyline in Book 16, then the ‘Odysseus–Telemachus’ storyline and the ‘Ithaca’ storyline in Book 17. The narrator does not follow through his three storylines one after the other, but from time to time—effectively—switches between them, towards the moment of their merging even increasingly; the ‘interlace’ technique †. In detail we get the following picture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Odysseus’ storyline</th>
<th>‘Telemachus’ storyline</th>
<th>‘Ithaca’ storyline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1–95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.96–2.434</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(split:)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.1–4.624</td>
<td>4.625–847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1–14.533</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.1–300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.301–495</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.495–557</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(merge:)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.1–321</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Aristotle *Poetics* 1459b (‘epic, on account of its use of narrative, can include many parts as taking place at the same time’, πολλὰ μὲρη ἄμα τοιεῖν περινόμενα).
Because of the ‘continuity of time’ principle †, i.e., the narrator never returning in time, the storylines are better not thought of as simultaneous, but as parallel: while one storyline is in the foreground, the others usually remain stationary, i.e., time ticks on, but nothing important happens. That time progresses for the storyline in the background is suggested by the fact that the narrator usually leaves that storyline with an appositive summary † which contains an imperfect tense. Only thrice the ‘continuity of time’ principle is not observed: 13.185–9; 16.1–3; and 17.492–3nn. Twice important developments do take place in the background: 15.301–495 and 21.188–244nn. Occasionally, we do find instances of small-scale simultaneity, which are then marked explicitly; cf. 8.438–48n. Also, the repeated use of the ‘interlace’ technique at a short distance may create the illusion of simultaneity; cf. 4.625–847 and 17.492–606nn.

Whereas in the Iliad the narrator usually drops a storyline when it has reached a situation of rest, in the Odyssey it is not seldom in an open, unresolved state, which makes the narratees eager to hear its continuation. Occasionally, we even have a real cliff-hanger, cf. 4.847; 15.295–300nn.

The narrator reminds us of the storylines in the background by making characters refer to persons/situations belonging to those storylines: people on Ithaca, Pylos, or Sparta talk about absent Odysseus; the Suitors and Penelope talk about absent Telemachus; and Odysseus abroad talks about home.


APPENDIX C
THE PIECEMEAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE NOSTOI OF ODYSSEUS, AGAMEMNON, AND MENELAUS

The stories of the nostoi of Agamemnon, Odysseus (until the beginning of the Odyssey), and Menelaus are distributed over Nestor, Menelaus, and Odysseus, according to the Homeric technique of ‘piecemeal’ presentation, a form of par-alsipsis †.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Nestor</th>
<th>Menelaus (+ quoting Proteus)</th>
<th>Odysseus (+ quoting Agamemnon)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agamemnon</td>
<td>Half of the Greeks depart, but Ag. remains in Troy (3.130–56)</td>
<td>Ag.’s voyage from Troy to Greece (4.512–23)</td>
<td><em>Ag.</em> killed by Aeg. (3.193–4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Or.</em> takes revenge (3.195–8, 303–10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odysseus</td>
<td>Having sailed with Men. and Nestor to Tenedos, Od. returns to Troy and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three principles can be observed. (i) The stories complement each other, in that gaps left by one speaker are filled in by another one: e.g., Nestor tells about the beginning and end of Agamemnon’s return, Menelaus fills in the intervening part. (Note, however, the permanent gap of the reunion between Menelaus and Helen.) (ii) Conversely, overlaps are avoided (cf. the programmatic statement in 12.452–3: ‘I hate to tell a story over again, when it has been told well’): Menelaus and Odysseus leave out the earlier stages of their return, which were covered already by Nestor. (iii) When speakers do cover the same ground, there are differences in focalization: the revenge on Aegisthus is presented by Nestor as belonging to the past, by Menelaus quoting Proteus as an event which still

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Nestor</th>
<th>Menelaus</th>
<th>Odysseus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>joins Ag.</td>
<td>joins Ag.</td>
<td>joins Ag.</td>
<td>joins Ag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Od. travels from Troy to Ogygia</td>
<td>Od. travels from Troy to Ogygia</td>
<td>Od. travels from Troy to Ogygia</td>
<td>Od. travels from Troy to Ogygia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Books 9–12)</td>
<td>(Books 9–12)</td>
<td>(Books 9–12)</td>
<td>(Books 9–12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Od. on Ogygia</td>
<td>Od. on Ogygia</td>
<td>Od. on Ogygia</td>
<td>Od. on Ogygia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Menelaus

Men. sails with Nestor and Od. to Tenedos, joins Nestor and Diom. on Lesbos, sails with them to Geraestus (3.130–60a, 168–9)
Men., delayed at Sounion, is driven off course at Malea, towards Egypt (3.276–302)

Men. in Egypt and other exotic countries (4.83–91a, 351–586)
Men. comes home on Men. will perhaps take part the day Or. buries Aeg. in Aeg.' burial (3.311–12) (4.547b)
has to take place; the murder of Agamemnon is recounted once from the point of view of the murderer (Menelaus quoting Proteus), once from that of the victim (Odysseus quoting Agamemnon).

The effect of the technique is of course a masterful build-up of tension: the narratees are given pieces of information, but have to wait until they hear the sequel. It is also effective that we hear much about Menelaus (from Nestor) and about Odysseus (from Menelaus), just before we meet them in person.
### APPENDIX D

‘storm’ scenes in the *ODYSSEY*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>place, time</td>
<td>286–8</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>403–4</td>
<td>301–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>divine source</td>
<td>288–9</td>
<td>282–90</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>405, 415</td>
<td>303, 305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clouds</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>293–4</td>
<td>68–9</td>
<td>314–15</td>
<td>405–6</td>
<td>303–4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>darkness, of the air</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>294b</td>
<td>= 69b</td>
<td>= 315b</td>
<td>406b</td>
<td>304b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the sea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wind</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>292–3,</td>
<td>67–8</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>407–8</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>295–6,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>321–2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waves</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>296b,</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>419, 425</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>313–14,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>327–30,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>366–7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man/men falling</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>315,</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>413–14,</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overboard</td>
<td></td>
<td>319–23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>417–19</td>
<td>307–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ship/raft destroyed</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>(i) 316–18</td>
<td>70–1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>409–11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) 370</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thunder/lightning</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>415–17</td>
<td>305–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one person survives on part of the ship/raft</td>
<td>(i) 324–6</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>420–5</td>
<td>310–13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>landing</td>
<td>(ii) 370–1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299–300</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX E

**The Recurrent Elements of Odysseus' Lying Tales**

Unless otherwise indicated, the (unexpressed) subject or he/him is the speaker (= Odysseus pretending to be somebody else).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cretan identity</td>
<td>256–7</td>
<td>199–206</td>
<td></td>
<td>172–80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idomeneus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>is general with</td>
<td>is brother of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kills son of Idomeneus</td>
<td>(258–71)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(235–9)</td>
<td>(180–5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>fought in</td>
<td>Idomeneus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fought in Troy</td>
<td>(262–6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(229, 235–41)</td>
<td>fought in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(182–3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>expedition to;</td>
<td>expedition to;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>defeated,</td>
<td>defeated,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>but he stays</td>
<td>and he is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>with king for</td>
<td>sold to Cyprus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>seven years</td>
<td>(424–43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(245–86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenicians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>convey him,</td>
<td>convey him,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>but intend to</td>
<td>sell him as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sell him as</td>
<td>slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(287–98)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Storm  is driven  is shipwrecked  is driven
off course  (299–313)  off course  (306–7)
to Ithaca  (276–86)  to Ithaca  

Thesprotia  washed ashore to;
entertained by king;
(314–33)
travels on Thespr.  travels on Thespr.
ship to Doulichion  ship to Doulichion
Sailors want to  (291–2)
sell him, but he escapes  (334–59)

Odysseus  entertained  Od. on his way
to Troy  (185–202, 225–48)
entertained  Od. five years
ago in  Sicania  
(266–79, 309–14)

hears from Thespr.  hears from Thespr.
king  king about Od.’
past adventures  (270–82),
that Od. is in Dodona,  and that he is now in
about to return  Dodona, about to return
(321–33)  (288–90, 293–9)
## Appendix F

### The ‘Storeroom’ Type-Scene

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descent</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of storeroom</td>
<td>κηώντα</td>
<td>κηώντα, κεδρίνον, υψόροφον</td>
<td>κηώντα</td>
<td>υψόροφον, εὔρυν</td>
<td>έσχατον</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>πέπλοι</td>
<td>γλήνεα</td>
<td>ἐσθής, κειμήλια</td>
<td>πέπλοι, κειμήλια</td>
<td>εἴματι</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>χρυσός, χαλκός, εἴλαιον, πίθοι οἶνοι</td>
<td></td>
<td>χρυσός, χαλκός, σίδηρος</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>τόξον, φαρέτρη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lock/guard</td>
<td>cf. 89</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>344–7</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>46–50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>228–37</td>
<td>349–80</td>
<td>102–4a, 106</td>
<td>53–4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of one of the objects</td>
<td>289–92</td>
<td>234–5a</td>
<td>342–3</td>
<td>105b</td>
<td>13–41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special value of object(s) chosen</td>
<td>294–5</td>
<td>235b-237</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>107–8</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>109–10</td>
<td>58–62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahrens, W. (1937) Gnomen in griechischer Dichtung, Halle
Allione, L. (1963) Telemaco e Penelope nell’Odissea, Turin
(1977) ‘Odysseus and the Wooden Horse’, SO 52: 5–18
(1992) ‘Agamemnon’s Singer (Od. 3.262–272)’, SO 57: 5–26
Arend, W. (1933) Die typischen Scenen bei Homer, Berlin
Auerbach, E. (1953) *Mimesis: the Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, transl. by W. Trask, Princeton (German original: 1946)


(1972) ‘Name Magic in the Odyssey’, *ClAnt* 5: 1–19


(1920) ‘Ὑστερον πρότερον Ὀμηρικῶς (Cic. *Att*. 1, 16, 1)’, *HSPh* 31: 39–62


(1923b) ‘The Second Necyia Again’, *AJPh* 44: 44–52

(1930–1) ‘Dismissing the Assembly in Homer’, *CJ* 26: 458–60

(1933) ‘The Fate of the Phaeacians (v 125–87; cf. θ 565–7)’, *CPh* 28: 305–7

(1938) *The Poetry of Homer*, Berkeley


Beckmann, J. T. (1932) *Das Gebet bei Homer*, Würzburg


Blom, J. W. S. (1930) *De typische getallen bij Homerus en Herodotus*, Nijmegen
Bona, G. (1966) *Studi sull’Odisssea*, Turin
(1934) ‘*Ὀρσοθύρη* (χ 126–46), *RhM* 83: 97–112
Calhoun, G. M. (1934) ‘*Télémaque et le plan de l’*Odyssée*, *REG* 47: 153–63
Clader, L. L. (1976) *Helen. The Evolution from Divine to Heroic in Greek Epic Tradition*, Leiden
(1967) *The Art of the Odyssey*, Englewood Cliffs
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Curtius, E. R. (1953) European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, transl. by W. Trask, Princeton (German original: 1948)
Dekker, A. F. (1965) Ironie in de Odyssee, Leiden
Delebecque, E. (1958) Télémaque et la structure de l’Odyssée, Gap
(1989) The Unity of the Odyssey, Amherst
Dirlmeier, F. (1966) Die Giftpeile des Odysseus (zu Odyssey 1, 252–66), Heidelberg
(1967) Die Vogelgestalt homerischer Götter, Heidelberg
(1995a) *Siren Songs. Gender, Audiences, and Narrators in the Odyssey*, Ann Arbor
Drerup, E. (1913) *Das fünfte Buch der Ilias: Grundlagen einer homerischen Poetik*, Paderborn
Eberhard, E. E. (1923) *Das Schicksal als poetische Idee bei Homer*, Paderborn
(1980a) ‘Convention and Individuality in *Iliad* 1’, *HSPh* 84: 1–28
Erbse, H. (1972) *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odyssee*, Berlin
(1997) *De Homerische goden en de moraal*, Amsterdam
Finley, J. (1978) *Homer’s Odyssey*, Harvard
Fränkel, H. (1921) *Die homerischen Gleichnisse*, Göttingen
(1962) *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*, Munich
Fraser, A. D. (1929) ‘Scheria and the Phaeacians’, *TAPhA* 60: 155–78
Galinksy, G. K. (1972) *The Herakles Theme*, Oxford
Groningen, B. A. van (1946) *The Proems of the Iliad and the Odyssey*, Amsterdam
(1958) *La Composition littéraire archaïque grecque: procédés et réalisations*, Amsterdam
Hebel, V. (1970) *Untersuchungen zur Form und Funktion der Wiedererzählungen in Iliad und Odyssee*, Heidelberg
Hellwig, B. (1964) *Raum und Zeit im homerischen Epos*, Hildesheim
(1954) *Der Odysse-Dichter und die Ilias*, Erlangen
Hölscher, U. (1939) *Untersuchungen zur Form der Odyssee*, Berlin
Houston, G. W. (1975) ‘Θρόνος, Δίφρος, and Odysseus’ Change from Beggar to Avenger’, *CPh* 70: 212–14
Irmscher, J. (1950) *Götterzorn bei Homer*, Leipzig
Jones, P. V. (1988a) *Homer’s Odyssey*, Bristol
Houston, G. W. (1975) ‘Θρόνος, Δίφρος, and Odysseus’ Change from Beggar to Avenger’, *CPh* 70: 212–14
Irmscher, J. (1950) *Götterzorn bei Homer*, Leipzig
Jones, P. V. (1988a) *Homer’s Odyssey*, Bristol
(1987a) Narrators and Focalizers. The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad, Amsterdam
Kakridis, J. Th. (1949) *Homeric Researches*, Lund
(1971) *Homer Revisited*, Lund

Lee, D. J. N. (1964) The Similes of the Iliad and the Odyssey Compared, Melbourne
Lessing, F. (1949) Laocooen, Nathan the Wise, (German original: 1766) London–New York
LfgR.E: Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos, Göttingen 1955–
Lieshout, R. G. A. van (1980) Greeks on Dreams, Utrecht
(1990) Creatures of Speech. Lion, Herding, and Hunting Similes, Stuttgart
(1993b) ‘An Extended Narrative Pattern in the Odyssey’, GRBS 34: 5–33
Meinel, R. (1915) *Κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον. Ein Grundsatz der Homererklärung Aristarchis*, Ansbach


(1977) *Similes in the Homeric Poems*, Göttingen

(1979) ‘Homeric Metaphor’, *CPh* 74: 279–93


Müller, F. (1968) ‘Darstellung und poetische Funktion der Gegenstände in der *Odyssee*’, dissertation Marburg


(1987) ‘Odysseus and Hephaestus in the *Odyssey*’, *CJ* 83: 12–20
(1992b) ‘“Name-Magic” and the Threat of Lying Strangers in Homer’s *Odyssey*’, *ICS* 17: 1–8
Otterlo, W. A. A. van (1944) ‘Untersuchungen über Begriff, Anwendung und Entstehung der griechischen Ringkomposition’, Amsterdam
Peradotto, J. (1990) Man in the Middle Voice, Name and Narration in the Odyssey, Princeton
(1977) Composition by Theme in the Odyssey, Meisenheim
Preisshofen, F. (1977) Untersuchungen zur Darstellung des Greisenalters in der frühgriechischen Dichtung, Wiesbaden
Prier, R. A. (1989) Thauma idesthai. The Phenomenology of Sight and Appearance in Archaic Greek, Talahassee
Rank, L. P. (1951) *Etymologisering en verwante verschijnselen bij Homerus*, Assen
Redfield, J. (1968–9) ‘Über die *Odyssee*, *Antaios* 10: 55–75
(1994) *Fernbeziehungen in der Ilias*, Tübingen
Rothe, C. (1914) Die Odyssee als Dichtung und ihr Verhältnis zur Ilias, Paderborn
Russo, J. (1968) ‘Homer against his Tradition’, Arion 7: 275–95
(1992) Homer Odyssey XIX and XX, Cambridge
Saïd, S. (1978) La Faute tragique, Paris
Schadewaldt, W. (1938) Iliasstudien, Leipzig
(1959a) Neue Kriterien zur Odyssee-Analyse. Die Wiedererkennung des Odysseus und der Penelope, Heidelberg
(1959b) ‘Kleiderdinge’, Hermes 87: 13–26
(1959c) Von Homers Welt und Werk, 3rd edn, Stuttgart
Schönbeck, G. (1962) *Der locus amoenus von Homer bis Horaz*, Heidelberg
Schröter, R. (1950) *Die Aristie als Grundform homerischer Dichtung und der Freiermord in der Odyssee*, Marburg
(1918) ‘Eurynome and Eurycleia in the *Odyssey*’, *CQ* 12: 75–9


Stürmer, F. (1921) *Die Rhapsodien der *Odyssee*, Würzburg


Valk, M. van der (1935) *Beiträge zur Nekyia*, Leiden–Kampen


Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, U. von (1884) *Homerische Untersuchungen*, Berlin
(1927) *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus*, Berlin
(1994) *Homeric Morality*, Leiden
INDEX OF GREEK WORDS

ἀγαπητός 5.7–20
ἀγήνωρ 1.106
ἀεικέλιος 14.32–4
ἀεικής 17.215–16
ἀθέμιστ(ι)ος 17.360–4
ἀθέσφατος 7.240–97
ἀδρείη Introduction to 9
ἀνη δηήσης Introduction to 9
ἀνόμορος Introduction to 9
ἀνότατος 8.519
ἀπές ὀλέθρος Introduction to 9
ἀλείτης 20.121
ἀμβροσίη νυξ 7.240–97
ἀναίδης 20.29–30
ἀναξ 14.36
ἀπήμων Introduction to 9
ἀποφώλιος 14.192–359
ἀρείων Introduction to 9
ἀσκηθής Introduction to 9
 أنحاءαλ- 1.32–43
ἀτερπ- 7.240–97
ἀφραδ- 17.233
γεύσθαι 21.98

δαιμών 5.421
δειλός Introduction to 9
dεινοὺς κόλπους 5.49–54
dολόμητις 4.525
δύτη 14.192–359
δυσμενής 14.192–359
dύσμορος 1.48–59
dύστηνος 5.436

ἔνυδκέως 15.305
ἐνηής 8.200
ἐσθλός 15.556–7

ἡθείος 14.144–7

ήπιος 15.556–7

θαρσάλεως 1.381–2

θροσειάων...χειρῶν
5.432–5

θυμαλγής 22.178–202

θυμολέον Introduction to 9

θυμόν ἔδοντες Introduction to 9

κακός Introduction to 9
κάλλιστος 15.105–8
κάματος...αἴνος 5.453–7
κάμομος 5.160
καταθυστός 7.244–96
κεδνότατος Introduction to 9

κείθεν 8.516–20
κείθες 8.516–20
κέινος 1.163
κέισε 8.516–20
κήδιστος Introduction to 9

λώβη 18.346–8

μεγίστος 15.105–8
μέλλω 2.156; 6.110–11

νεώτερος 7.244–96
νηλής Introduction to 9

νήπιος 9.44
νυξ μέλαινη 7.240–97

ζεῖνος 1.120

 odioμαι 1.48–62

οδύσσομαι 19.401–9

οίζύς 3.130–85

οὐκτίστος Introduction to 9

οἶτος 8.489–90
INDEX OF GREEK WORDS

όλος 3.130–85  στυγερός 5.394–9  ύπερμενέοντες 19.61–2
όλοώτατος 4.441–4  σχέτλιος 21.28  ύπερφίαλος 1.134
ήττι τάχιστα 8.434  τετληπότι θυμόντωs 20.11–13
ούλόμενος Introduction τηλεθαστός 15.224
  to 9  τηλεθαστός 15.224
πανδαμάτωρ 9.372–3  ύπερονερέων 2.324
πατρίς 13.197  ύβρι- 1.227  φίλος 1.19
πελώριος Introduction to 9  ύπερβασί̔ς 13.190–3  φόνον αἰτίων 4.842–3
πημα 8.81  ύπέρβιος 16.410  χαλεπός 14.192–359
πολύτροπος 1.1  χρείω 6.130–7
INDEX OF SUBJECTS

‘accursed belly’ motif 7.215–21
‘action-perception-reaction’ pattern 5.279–90
actual *dis*-speech 2.323–37
Agelaus 20.320–37
Alcinous 7.139–206
‘(all) the others . . . but X (alone) . . .’ motif 1.11–15
‘always’ of quarrels 17.388
Amphinomus 16.394–9
Antinous 1.367–424
‘*aporia*’ motif 9.13–15
Arete 7.54–74
‘arrival by car’ type-scene 4.39–42
‘as far . . . as a shouting voice carries’ motif 12.181–3
‘assembly’ type-scene 2.6–259
Athena 1.26–95
Athena’s embedded focalization as sign-post for narratees 3.77–8
‘bathing’ type-scene 3.464–9
‘beautification’ scene 6.229–35
‘bird’ imagery 2.143–207
‘bird’ scenes 1.319–24
Calypso 5.85–91
catalogue 3.412–15
characters changing their mind 15.150–9

---

crimes of the Suitors  Introduction to 22
‘cunning versus force’ theme 8.266–366
‘delayed recognition’ story-pattern 16.4–219
Demodocus  Introduction to 8
‘departure by car’ type-scene 3.474–85
‘departure by ship’ type-scene 2.382–426
‘description by negation’ technique 9.116–41
‘distraction’ device 4.168–82
‘distrust’ motif 1.166–8
‘disturbed meal’ motif 1.106–12
‘divine anger’ motif 1.19–21
divine omniscience 4.379
Dolius 4.735–7
‘dream’ speech 6.25–40
‘dream’ type-scene 4.795–841
‘dressing’ type-scene 2.3–4

---

ease of divine actions and lifestyle 3.231
effects of epic storytelling 8.83–92
emancipation of speech 1.400–11
emotional preambles of embedded narratives 3.103–17
‘erroneous questions’ device 2.342–9
escort to the next destination 3.317–28
Eumaeus  Introduction to 14
Euryklea 1.428–35
Eurylochus 10.135–468

---

624
INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Eurymachus 1.367–424
Eurynome 17.492–506
‘exile after homicide’ motif 13.258–71
‘farewell’ speech 8.408–15
‘festive meal’ type-scene 15.135–43
first-person narrative Introduction to 9
‘fish’ comparisons/similes 22.381–91
‘forgetting-remembering’ motif 1.57

genealogies 7.54–74
‘gift of clothes’ motif 14.122–32
‘gift of the gods’ motif 2.116–18
gnomic utterances 7.307
‘god meets mortal’ scene 1.96–324
‘guest will remember his host at home’ motif 8.101–3

‘harbour’ description 13.96–112
‘he/they invested but never enjoyed’ motif 16.119–20
‘he sat down on the seat from which he had risen’ motif 5.195–6
Helen 4.121–36

identification of the guest 1.169–77
‘indirect deliberation’ scenes 4.117–20
interruptive μέλλω 6.110–11
kleos 9.19–20

Laertes 1.188–93
‘labour’ motif 15.317–24
‘landing’ type-scene 13.93–124
language of the gods 10.305
laughter of the Suitors and maids 18.35
‘left behind’ motif 11.68
Leocritus 2.242–56
Leodes 21.144–8

‘(collective) libation’ type-scene 3.332–42
lying tales 13.253–86

Medon 4.675–715
Melanthius 17.210–14
Melantho 18.321–6
Menelaus 4.20–43
Mentor 2.225–8
metanarrative Introduction to 8
mortal challenges immortal and dies’ motif 8.223–8

narratorial intervention 4.772
Nausicaa 6.15–19
‘no other could vie with X in’ motif 15.321–4
nostalgic wish 1.253–69
‘not alone’ motif 2.11
‘(not) even + hyperbole’ motif 4.595–8

‘oath’ type-scene 5.177–91
Odysseus

as archer 1.255–64
biography 1.255–64
characterization 5.151–8
compared to singer 11.363–9
disguise 13.429–38
disguise 13.429–38

‘Odysseus departs’ motif 2.171–6
‘omen’ scene 2.143–207
‘one against many’ motif 16.117–21
open ends 13.363–71
‘Oresteia’ story 1.32–43
‘outward appearance versus inner quality’ theme 18.1–158
‘parents and children’ comparisons/similes 2.47
Penelope
   characterization 1.328–66
   comparison with Clytemnestra and Helen 11.409–56
   remarriage 1.249–51
   web 2.93–110
‘Penelope leaves her room’ scenes 1.328–66
Phaeacians Introduction to 6
Phemius 1.151–60
Philoetius 20.185–240
Pisistratus 3.34–64
Poseidon’s wrath 1.19–21
potential tis-speech 6.275–85
‘prayer’ type-scene 2.260–7
prolepses of Odysseus’ return 2.143–207
   of Odysseus’ revenge on the Suitors 1.113–18
   of the Suitors’ death 13.372–439
proleptic μέλλω 2.156
provisions 2.337–81
reactions to embedded narratives 4.266
‘recalled prophecy’ motif 2.171–6
reception of a guest 1.113–35
‘recusatio’ motif 4.240–3
‘rejected suggestion’ device 4.20–43
‘retiring for the night’ type-scene 3.396–403
rhetorical questions 22.12–14
‘role reversal simile 5.394–9
’sacrifice’ type-scene 3.417–73
sea voyage 2.427–34
seating arrangement 1.130–5
significant use of the dual 13.372
   of the possessive pronoun 13.251
simultaneity 8.438–48
singers Introduction to 8
‘sleep’ motif 5.491–3
‘sleeplessness’ motif 20.1–57
smiles 4.609
smoke 9.166–7
speech evaluation 6.56–70
‘speech within speech’ device 2.96–102
‘standing near’ in speech-introductions 10.377
‘storeroom’ type-scene 21.5–62
‘storm’ scenes 3.286–300 and Appendix D
‘stranger meets with local inhabitant’ story-pattern Introduction to 6
sunrise 2.1
sunset 1.423
‘supplication’ scene 7.139–206
‘supplication’ speech 6.148–85
‘suppression of Odysseus’ name’ motif 1.1
suspense 1.16–18
‘sympathetic’ dative 5.316
’table of contents’ speeches 1.81–95
Telemachus
   characterization 1.113–18
   coming of age 1.296–7
   resemblance to Odysseus 1.206–12
‘test’ motif 13.335–8
Theoclymenus 15.222–58
‘there is a place X’ motif 3.293–6
‘there was a person X’ motif 3.293–6
thresholds 17.339–41
‘they call’ passages 5.273
token of recognition 19.225–48
truth of epic storytelling 8.487–91
two consecutive speeches by one speaker 5.21–42
unspoken thoughts of Odysseus 14.109–10
‘visit’ type-scene 1.96–324
‘watchdog’ motif 7.91–4
‘welcome’ speech 1.123–4
INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Wooden Horse 4.271–89

‘X thought of something else’ motif 2.382
‘X acted as Y had ordered’ motif 2.415

‘you used to be sensible, but now you talk nonsense’ motif 4.31–2